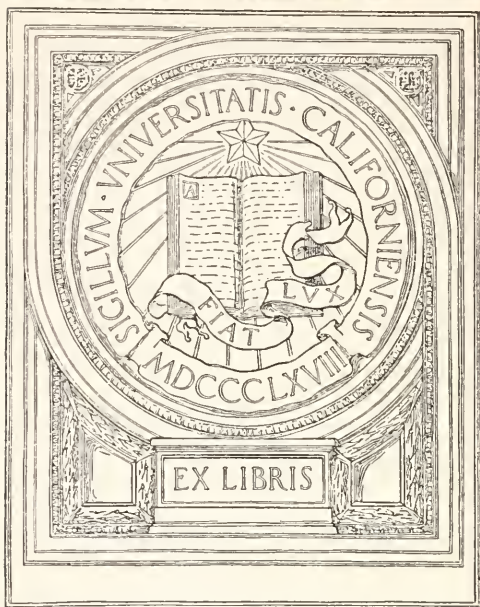


THE STORY  
OF  
A PIONEER

by  
V. Davison.



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
AT LOS ANGELES



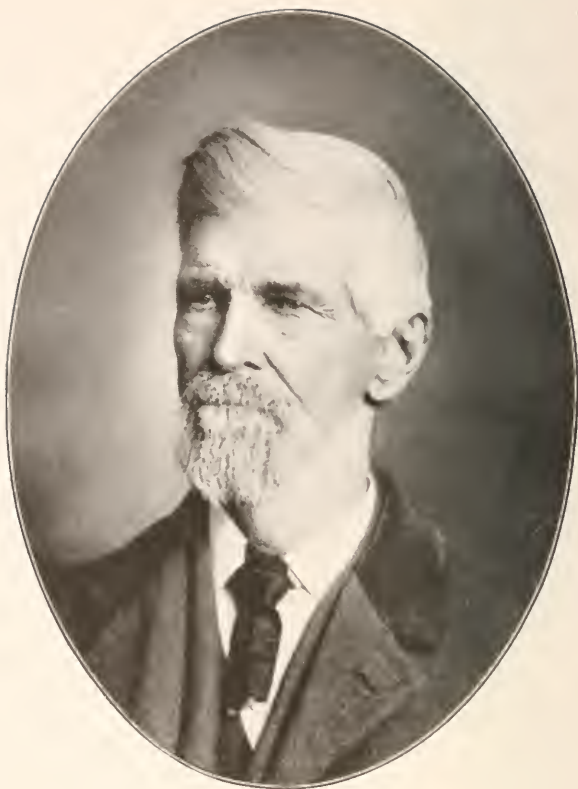
ROBERT ERNEST COWAN







Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2008 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation



*Yours Truly*  
*W. Deviney*

The  
Story of a Pioneer

---

---

BY V. DEVINNY

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH  
in which is depicted some of the  
Struggles and Exciting Incidents  
Pertaining to the Early Settlement  
of Colorado

DENVER, COLORADO  
THE REED PUBLISHING COMPANY .  
Nineteen Hundred Four

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA  
AND ANGELES LIBRARY

Copyright, 1904, by  
V. DEVINNY

PRESS OF  
The Reed Publishing Company  
DENVER



F780  
D492

## To the Brave Pioneers and Their Children

My Friends and Comrades

Who reclaimed from savagery and dreary desolation the  
great desert region of the West, and converted it  
into a home of enlightened civilization and  
wealth, this book is affectionately  
dedicated with pride and  
pleasure by

THE AUTHOR

COLUMBIAN LIBRARY, 1936

276423

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**F**or appreciated assistance in the publication of this work the author is indebted to the following persons: For endorsement of its merits and urging its publication, to Mr. C. A. Bonfils, editor of the "Sunday Post," a paper popular by force of its worth. For art work to Mr. F. E. Graf. For valuable suggestions and approval to Mrs. Adda A. Stanley and Isalene B. Reed. Also to my publisher, for so neatly dressing up my thoughts in the beauties of the typographic art. All of which are hereby gratefully acknowledged.

# CONTENTS

---

	Page
Preface . . . . .	7
Introduction . . . . .	11
The Story of a Pioneer . . . . .	17
Minta Abel, the Cow Herder Girl . . . . .	135

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Portrait of the Author . . . . .	Frontispiece
Portrait of Col. W. F. Cody ("Buffalo Bill") . . . . .	11
Beautiful Nora Norton . . . . .	24
The Cloud-burst . . . . .	56
Nora Alone in the Mountains . . . . .	64
"A Feast of Mountain Strawberries" . . . . .	72
Nora Returning from the Brook . . . . .	88



## PREFACE



THE remarkable events and circumstances in connection with the exciting rush of 1859-60 to Pike's Peak, the only point then known and named near the reported rich gold fields of Colorado, should be indelibly impressed upon the minds of the people as a heritage and memorial of the admirable and heroic work of the brave pioneers. Their grand and glorious work has won our gratitude and respect. In the land of the hostile Indian and the wild beast he built his home, and risked his life, his health and his fortune to subdue it and make it prolific.

To revive and preserve in memory the heroic deeds of the pioneer, who is now fast passing away, and to relate some of the peculiar occurrences, and portray a few of the grotesque scenes in connection therewith, is my pride, privilege and purpose in this narrative.

Never again will the same primitive conditions and circumstances be seen or re-enacted within the wide borders of these United States, for the wild grandeur of the scenes in this once vast desert plain has been destroyed. The quiet repose of beast and bird has been disturbed, or they have become extinct. The enterprise of man and the railroad have entered into all the wild places of the Great West, and opened them up to civilization. The buffalo and Indian no longer roam the plains; the stately elk and the fleet-footed antelope no longer make a living picture against the pale blue sky; nor does the heavy freight wagon drawn by six yoke of oxen, or five span of mules, steer its way over the hills and prairies.

No more is the long emigrant train seen wearily wending its way over the hills and valleys of the plains; but in its stead the railway locomotive with its piercing voice and thundering sound shoots over it. The rugged and attractive scenes of nature in her undis-

turbed beauty have passed away. Never again will the spirit of man find a welcoming echo in the wild hills and the vast, silent prairies, for it was the fate of the pioneer to destroy the beauty that charmed him. While it is not for those who come after him to see and feel this wild grandeur, still they may catch a glimpse of it in THE STORY OF A PIONEER.

*Yours Truly*  
*V. Dewney*

Edgewater  
Colorado

Beautiful Colorado!  
The fairest of the fair,  
With brilliant sun  
And crystal air,  
And farms, and mines,  
Of richest worth:—  
The choicest place  
For homes on earth.







W. B. Cody  
"Buffalo Bill"

## INTRODUCTION



THE conversion of the plains of the far West, once known as the Great American Desert, into a suitable abode for civilized man was a peculiarly grand and wonderful work for the brave and heroic pioneer. This development was due, in a great measure, to the immense immigration which poured into the gold fields of Colorado in the spring of 1860 and subsequent years. The people who entered into this expedition boldly risked life and all that was dear to them in their long, perilous and tedious journey by wagon-train over the arid plains, then occupied by savage Indians and wild beasts.

The thrilling scenes and incidents encountered in connection with the peculiar life and travel upon the plains and through the mountains on that memorable occasion, which were experienced by myself and by the author of this

book, as well, furnish ample material, when properly collated and arranged, for a highly interesting and pleasing narrative.

It affords me, therefore, much pleasure to learn that the author has taken upon himself the commendable task of making a connected and reliable narrative of these strange and wonderful incidents of the then wild and undeveloped West, of which I believe him in every way capable, and whom I have the honor to claim as my last and most efficient instructor in the days of my boyhood.

It seems but a just tribute to the heroism of these early pioneers to properly place upon record the striking incidents which led to and resulted in the transformation of the great desert region of the West into a veritable Garden of Eden, dotted with farms, homes, towns and cities, where dwell a prosperous and happy people, thus furnishing and transmitting to the future historian the peculiar conditions and wild surroundings now destroyed by advanc-

ing civilization, and now no more to be seen by mortal eye, under which by the genius of man, the dreary desert was awakened from its dead slumber of centuries by the inspiring waters of irrigation, which the thirsty soil of the desert eagerly drank, and lo and behold! it bloomed and blossomed as the rose. The hidden treasures of the mountains were then also opened up, and thus the desert region was made one of the richest and most attractive of the earth.

I am glad to encourage the author in his pleasant rehearsal of these stirring incidents, so familiar to both of us, furnishing as it does a pen-picture of the wonderful transformation of the wild waste lands of the West into a marvelously productive region, supplying all the wants and comforts of civilized man.

*W. F. Cody*  
*"Buffalo Bill"*

Cody, Wyoming  
March, 1904



# The Story of a Pioneer





## THE STORY OF A PIONEER



THE RUSH to the gold regions of Colorado in the spring of 1860 was most remarkable. The lives of those brave pioneers, were fraught with many interesting incidents, which, if collected, would form a treasure store, descriptive of the conquests, pain, perils and shattered hopes attending western pioneer life. It stirs to admiration and inspires the mind with noble feelings to contemplate the heroism of the pioneer settlers of a new country who leave relatives and friends and the dear homes of their childhood to dwell upon the western prairie—wild, cheerless and undeveloped—away from all that is dear to head and heart, there to build new

cities and new homes, and form new ties of friendship.

Those who, at this period, witnessed these vast trains of moving wagons, drawn by mules, horses, oxen, and even by cows, or beheld the less fortunate traveling with hand carts loaded with "bed and board," and footmen with packs upon their backs—as motley and as strange a procession as ever eye beheld, five or more miles long—could not but have entertained feelings experienced by these travelers. It was a sight never to be forgotten—this vast caravan, moving slowly along in the distance, over hilltop and plain, forming a dark, curving line across the far-reaching green prairie, like a monster serpent in its slow-traveling search for food.

The life of a pioneer is not, as many suppose, a life of pleasant adventure and delightful romance; on the contrary, it is one of stern

reality, demanding the full and complete action of both the mental and physical qualities of man—full of responsibility, toil and care.

Among the vast number of people who sought gain and gold in Colorado at this early date there were but few families. Many married men, it is true, made their way here, but with but few exceptions, they wisely left their families behind. The greater portion were unmarried men of various ages in search of fickle fortune's favor.

It is not the purpose of this narrative to record the good fortune or failures of those numberless adventurers, nor to describe the good results or benefits to the now-grand state of Colorado in consequence of this great rush to the Pike's Peak gold region.

One family, however, whose neat and well-equipped wagon formed one of this great train, was drawn by two beautiful black horses, im-

patient under the enforced restraint, incident to the tardy progress of the slow-moving train of wagons in advance of them. Their wagon, like the others, was loaded with provisions, blankets, cooking utensils and other requisites of camp life. Its occupants consisted of four persons, Mr. and Mrs. Neal Norton, their fair daughter Nora, and her uncle, Andrew Norton, whom Nora familiarly termed Uncle "Drew."

The Nortons were intelligent, well-to-do farm people, who had taken a claim on government land in western Kansas, but receiving a fair offer for it, sold it, and being influenced by highly colored and exaggerated stories of the recent discovery of rich mines of gold in Cherry Creek, they "fixed up" and joined the train bound for "Pike's Peak."

Pike's Peak was then the only point named and known in that vast, wild, arid region, and though seventy-five miles from the point of

discovery of gold on Cherry Creek—now the present site of Denver—yet it gave a name for a time at least to the gold region of Colorado, in the midst of what was then described in the geographies as the Great American Desert, but which is now better known as western Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Montana and Idaho. Although it is a region with an insufficiency of rainfall in summer, it is not, in any sense, a desert, nor can it be called a plain, for Idaho, Montana and a part of Colorado are very mountainous regions.

The trip from Leavenworth, Kansas, the then frontier town, over the “plains” to Cherry Creek, a distance of about six hundred miles, and completed in six weeks’ time, was a pleasant one to the members of this great caravan. The weather was warm and pleasant, for it was in the merry months of May and June. The thick, velvety grass formed on the almost treeless land-

scape a beautiful carpet of brightest green. The bright sun poured down in its wonted way a continuous flood of soft, silvery, sparkling light, peculiar to this region, from a never-varying cloudless sky. This, together with the clear, colorless air, always void of smoke or fog, gave to the whole scene a weird, electric-light-like tint.

There was another strange peculiarity of the atmospheric condition of the plains which occasioned much wonder. There appeared day after day for several weeks, far in the distance, ahead of the train, dim but distinct views of real forests, sometimes spires and towers were also seen for a time, then all would fade away to appear again the next day, perhaps, like the in-coming and out-going scenes of a magic lantern. This incomprehensible phenomenon was always a bewildering mystery, giving cause for many a discussion or queer explana-

tion. The forests, steeples and towers, faded away as we approached them. The explanation of this interesting illusion is, that the dry air, heated by the intense sunshine of the plains, rising in undulating waves, lifts up, and spreads out, and magnifies the lines of vision coming from the object seen—magnified or distorted, and thus carried to the eye of the beholder. Thus shapely weeds, not a foot high, are by this condition of the atmosphere, converted into tall, well proportioned trees or forests; and in like manner stumps of weeds into towers or citadels, and tall spears of grass are magnified into pinnacles or steeples.

The few feathered songsters, the occasional wild flowers, the absence of trees and shrubbery, the few antelope and buffalo seen—for they had receded from the line of travel on the approach of man—and the general absence of life all around, caused a sense of loneliness

and gloom to creep into one's mind, and bring up brighter scenes of home and happy friends far away. But those who travel by team and wagon have little time to give to gloomy thoughts, however much they may amuse or interest. The excitement and work of travel, and the watchfulness necessary in an Indian country, leave little time for aught else. The distance traveled was but fifteen or twenty—seldom twenty-five—miles per day, so as to reach “good camping ground.” That is to say, where there was grass and water for the teams, and fuel for the camp fire. As the line of travel pursued was on the old California trail of '49, along and up the valley of the Platte river, these requisites were always found; fuel from the scrubby willows on its moist banks, water from its channel and grass along its borders.

A natural feeling of loneliness and a want of protection inspires one with a desire for com-





Beautiful Nora Norton

The Victim of Misfortune—The Queen of Wealth

NOTE—This illustration, and others following, were furnished the Author by Nora Norton at a later date, kind-hearted girl that she was.



panionship and association, hence this vast train was held together and controlled by a sort of influence of its own. The action of the few was the action of all. As a swarm of bees follows the leader, and as all nestle upon the same branch she alights upon, so in this case when the leaders of the train turned out of the road toward camping ground, the others followed under a natural law of association, each selecting a choice spot upon which to pitch his tent, or stand his wagon, or upon which to cast his saddle and blankets, and graze his horse, if a horseman.

This done, the scene then presented was grand and peculiar. All was life and bustle. Like children just out from school, the newly-made camp was all astir. There was running hither and thither, some to the river for water, some for willow brush for the camp fire, while others with spoon, pan and flour were prepar-

ing to compound the historic "slap-jack" of camp life. For travel sharpens the appetite and gives flavor to, and even makes delicious, the plainest sort of food, so that meal-time was a most important event.

In a very short time the simple meal is ready, and placed on a blanket or table linen spread out upon the green grass, around which all gather and seat themselves on the ground, after the fashion and manner of a tailor, while the few women had a manner of their own—dropping on their knees, and making a seat of their dainty feet. All is gay and festive now; pleasant odors of the recently prepared meal float upon the air; merry voices ring out, and the joyous laugh is heard throughout the camp. The scene presented to the eye of a beholder is truly magnificent!

A city of white canvas-covered wagons and tents, stretched out along the river, with horses,

mules and cattle grazing between, in the midst of a green sea-like prairie, with its citizens in this queer posture, engaged in taking their noon-day meal, with the blue smoke from the now smoldering camp fires lazily ascending toward a cloudless sky of purest blue, from which poured forth over all, through the thin, colorless, glistening air, a flood of crystal light—this was the scene presented, and the manner of travel of those hardy pioneers, day after day, as they boastfully paraded in crude letters on their wagon covers, the motto, “Bound for Pike’s Peak,” or “For the Gold Diggings.”

To break the monotony of travel and camp life, field sports, fishing, hunting and shooting were frequently resorted to. As sailors upon long sea voyages, to while away the dullness of time, resort to story telling, so the travelers on the sea-like prairie engaged in song and story, as they squatted in circles around their

weak, blazing camp fires. Many a good story was thus told, and many a song was sung. Mutual dependence and reliance, one upon the other, for aid or benefit, engenders confidence and friendship the world over.

Hence a feeling of trust and esteem naturally bind frontiersmen together forming a union of fellowship and tenderness which is seldom forgotten. Friendships were thus formed around the camp fires and on the road which endured as long and were as dear as life itself.

The Nortons, with their attractive "outfit," drew around them many genial and admiring friends, who always camped near them, and thus were in one sense companions and neighbors. The camp fire of the Nortons was generally made large enough to enable all their friends to cook their food over its flames. On these occasions it was the joy and delight of little Nora to assist in the work of the camp.

She brought the water from the river, while her mother made ready the cooking utensils for the expectant camp-fire meal. Being the only child in that part of the long train, her busy nature and litheness made her a conspicuous and notable little personage throughout the camp. Her deportment and warm, genial manner added much to her attractiveness. Her every-day salutations to strangers and friends fell from her lips, wreathed in circles of smiles, as readily and pleasantly as notes from a sweet song bird. Her bright, cheerful face was an unfailing index to the joy and content which filled her mind. Petty crosses and disappointments which so often trouble others never found their way through the sunshine of her heart. She was, at this time, of stout, rather short build, and but fifteen years of age. Her features were regular and well formed, her complexion neither dark nor fair, but merged

into both. Her hair was jet black, falling in loose, wavy lines to her shoulders. Her eyes, dark and sparkling, stood out prominently, while her full, red lips, firmly set, displayed much self reliance. She had a clear-cut nose, somewhat of the Grecian type. Her features, taken as a whole, were indicative of fine mental powers and great possibilities.

As previously stated, Nora's father and mother were industrious, intelligent country people, who felt the necessity of inculcating into the minds of the young the importance of knowledge, industry and business ability, which manifested itself in the characteristics of their only daughter. Aside from this they possessed no marked quality in form or feature materially differing from many other respectable men and women one meets in the every day walks of life.

But Andrew Norton—"Uncle Drew"—re-



quires more than passing notice. As a child, he was self-willed and insubordinate, and caused his mother, then a widow, much trouble and anxiety. But feeling that this needful restraint was an abuse, after a reprimand for a serious disobedience, he stole away from the home of his childhood, and was not heard from for ten long years. Then a short letter came to his mother from him postmarked California, from which she gleaned little regarding his business or manner of life. After ten more years of mysterious silence he returned home to see his old mother, his total absence from home being twenty years. His aged and feeble mother, overjoyed at seeing him, fell upon his neck with sobs and tears. She could not control her troubled heart. She felt the ingratitude of her son in forgetting, for so many long years, his duty to his mother, whose affectionate solicitude for him in helpless infancy, gave to

her many a weary day, and stole from her, many a much-needed night's rest, and thus, in a measure, he owed her a vast debt of gratitude, for she was the watchful attendant of his life, and the guardian of it through the helplessness of infancy. While she felt in its fullness the depth of the wrong she had suffered, yet, with a mother's undying love for her offspring, she rejoiced that she again beheld her long-lost son.

The meeting was of too exciting a nature for her in her feeble condition, and in less than a fortnight its effect was noticeable. She grew less active and weaker day by day, and thus gradually she faded till death stole in and hushed her to sleep—blessed sleep, that closed the dreamer's eyes to the ingratitude and baseness of this vain world.

Before her death Drew learned that his brother Neal and family resided in western

Kansas, whither he went in search of them after he had weepingly followed the remains of his aged mother to the tomb.

He arrived just in time to find his brother and family on the eve of leaving their farm, and joined them in their western journey. He gave them much valuable advice and assistance in the selection of the many needful things for the long journey. It required considerable thought and judgment to properly load the wagon, which is a small affair to hold the necessary things for a journey, and leave room for the family besides. Provisions are of first importance, and there must be an abundance. Clothing, bedding, tableware and cooking utensils, all must find a place.

There was one incident in loading the wagon deserving mention, which was beneficent in its ultimate results to Nora Norton at least, and it proves also how little things reach out into

the impenetrable future and affect our lives for good or evil. In collecting together the household goods it became evident that the trunks and boxes on hand were insufficient to hold them. So Nora, in a merry mood, said: "I'll pack my things in that ten-gallon dairy can." This was done. Her "things" consisted of a few toilet articles and a limited wardrobe.

Dairy cans have iron bottoms, both to save them from wear and also to serve, like the ballast in a ship, to keep them upright in a rolling dairy wagon.

Andrew Norton claimed Pike's Peak was on his way home, and he would, therefore, be glad to accompany them and assist in their search for gold for a few weeks at least; after which he said he must proceed to his more important business. But he seemed guarded in his conversation relative to his business affairs and occupation. He appeared to be possessed of con-

siderable means, had plenty of ready money, spent it freely, and seemed content and happy. He was of medium height, with uncut hair. Like the hunters and trappers of that day, he wore a buckskin suit, decorated with beaver fur, and a brown hat, with a band of beaver fur. This, together with his bronzed face and long beard, stamped him as a trapper or hunter.

Be this as it may, he never gave any explanation relative to his odd garb, except to say it was the fashion of the people on the frontier where he dwelt.

He was familiar with western manners, ways and methods, and prolific in frontier stories, with which he delighted the camp-fire circle, thus charming away the dreary dullness which so often gathered around it. On one occasion, while thus engaged, little Nora came rushing into camp, which was in the vicinity of old Fort Kearney, on the Platte river, and with that

earnest excited manner peculiar to childhood, said:

"Oh, father, I saw some people asleep in the tops of those cottonwood trees yonder!" pointing to a clump of scrubby trees.

"Yes," replied her Uncle Drew, "I guess they are in their last sleep, and will never awaken."

"Why, Uncle Drew! What do you mean? They must be asleep, because they are wrapped snugly in their blankets, and I could see they were resting easy, on cross pieces well secured to opposite branches."

"That is doubtless true," replied her Uncle Drew, "for I think what you describe are Indian graves, and the wrappings you saw were the only shroud and coffin of the dead."

"Why, how queer," said Nora musingly. "To think that people would bury their friends in a tree top!"

Then addressing her uncle, she said: "Why don't they bury their dead in the ground?"

"Because," replied her uncle, "they have no tools with which to dig graves, and if they did, the half-starved coyotes would dig them up and eat them, hence they envelope their dead in buffalo robes or blankets, and securely fasten them in a tree top, beyond their reach. But out on the treeless prairie, from sheer necessity, they do dig a shallow grave with their hatchets and hands and bury their dead therein, leaving them there to be forever forgotten."

A visit to the clump of trees designated verified the surmises of Nora's uncle, for several dead bodies were seen in the tree-tops enveloped as described, and firmly lashed to the branches of the trees with cords of rawhide. A well-lettered notice put up by the Indian agent warned all persons not to molest the graves.

As no Indians had been seen up to this

time, these graves were the first indication that we were then in an Indian country, and with many there was much curiosity to see Indians in their native haunts, and to behold "the noble red man," as described in works of fiction, "in his unadorned beauty." Others, with less courage, shuddered at the thought of seeing an Indian. But we did not have long to wait to see these curious denizens of the plains, for the next day we located near an Indian camp, and we were afforded ample opportunity to observe the peculiarities of Indian home-life. But the glamour which filled our fancy with bright and pleasant thoughts was quickly dispelled on first sight of these dusty, dirty people. Their dress was neither neat nor clean. Old, castaway clothing of various colors, shapes and fits, tattered and torn, and blankets and buffalo robes drawn economically around them, hid their unwashed bodies from sight, and shielded them



from the cold, chilling winds of winter and the scorching suns of summer.

It is true, however, that chiefs and their sons, and other favorites of the tribe, have a gaudy display dress, beaded and feathered, for special occasions, but these are the exceptions and not the rule.

Their cookery, or rather want of it, is so at variance with any reasonably conceived idea of it, as to be incredible, except to those who have witnessed it. The raw flesh of animals they cut into long, narrow strips, and wrap it in a spiral form around a green, straight branch, or stick, and in its unwashed state hold it, not over, but in, the blaze of their camp fires till roasted. When cool enough to do so, they place its end in the side of their mouths, and munch it like a dog, unrolling it by turning the stick as they consume it. If the supply of meat is limited, they cut the entrails into suitable

lengths, pass them between their compressed finger and thumb, to empty them of their contents, and, in their unwashed state, without more ado, they wrap them around the stick and proceed to cook (?) them in the manner previously stated. Their food is often of the most disgusting nature. Grasshoppers and worms, unwashed and uncooked reptiles are eaten by them with a relish astonishing to behold. Their reputed skill as marksmen, and their reputation for agility and strength, all vanish before the face of truth. They are both uncouth and clumsy, and the scene they present on horseback is truly grotesque. The highly-colored stories of the nobility of the red man, and the gilded character given to the wild Indian, have no foundation in fact, existing only in the fancy of the writers of fiction, who use them to adorn their tales.

When the train arrived in the vicinity of

Julesburg—then but a stage station—a highly exciting incident occurred. The train had camped for the day near some trains enroute for Salt Lake City with supplies. All was quiet in camp. The noonday meal was past. Some were telling stories, some repairing harness or washing clothes; others were asleep or resting in the shadow of their wagons. All of a sudden a monster buffalo, lost from his herd, came prancing toward and into camp, his long, massive mane, covering shoulders, neck and forehead, undulated at every step as he advanced. The alarm was given by someone as he approached, and in an instant guns, revolvers and even knives were gotten out, and the camp was soon filled with excitement and confusion. Shooting at the animal began from every direction, but he was neither killed nor turned from his course, for his heavy mane was to him a protecting shield.

He was soon in the midst of camp, when the most intense excitement prevailed, and the most reckless and dangerous shooting was engaged in, for as the people gathered in a circle around the beast, the balls missing him would strike the opposite side of the circle. Fortunately, none were hurt, but the buffalo, maddened by the flesh wounds he had received, dashed furiously through the camp, trampling over tin pans, kettles and other camp utensils, and scattering the frightened people in every direction. He started off toward the river in a loping run, from which Nora Norton was then seen to be returning.

Maddened and crazed with pain as he then was, all felt that poor Nora was doomed, and a piteous cry was heard throughout the camp, as her perilous position was realized. Her mother fainted from fright, while her father and uncle cried aloud in deepest

agony. As nearer and nearer the enraged animal approached her the suspense and excitement became almost unendurable, for the ferocious beast was then, it seemed, but a few rods from her. But just at this exciting moment, a well-grown boy with gun in hand was seen going toward Nora in a rapid run. Hope filled the hearts of all for a moment, but it was soon to be dispelled, for the young man was not an instant by her side before he was seen to run as rapidly away to the right of the line pursued by the beast. Then suddenly wheeling round, he raised his gun to his shoulder with the skill of a trained marksman and fired, and the monster beast fell dead, pierced to the heart by a bullet.

Nora stood motionless, for she had become paralyzed with fright when she realized her danger. A joyous shout now filled the air, and a rush of the people of the camp was made

toward Nora and her benefactor. Congratulations were then bestowed upon Nora for her wonderful escape from so terrible a death, while upon her rescuer were showered praise and thanks in no unstinted measure. He was so modest that the praise bestowed upon him for this heroic act overwhelmed him with confusion. He explained that he receded from the side of Nora to take aim at the heart of the beast, well knowing that a bullet could never reach his brain through nature's shield—his mane-covered head.

His firm, positive method of speaking, together with his noble bearing, attracted marked attention, and indicated one capable of great possibilities. The young man was then known as Bill Cody, now better known as Colonel William F. Cody, the world famous "Buffalo Bill," and an old-time friend and pupil of the writer.

At this time Colonel Cody was a lithe, slender boy in his teens, and then manifested many of the characteristics which lead him later on to accomplish a notoriety attained by few. His education was limited to "the three R's, reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic," a trio of potent factors, which has enabled many to fill honored and lucrative places in both private and public life. As a pupil under the author's tutelage in a country schoolhouse, near Leavenworth City, Kansas, his bearing was upright and stately, his movements quick and abrupt, his language decisive and authoritative. While he loved pleasure and play, he was not rompish, nor rude, his manners being modest, dignified and quiet. His deportment was beyond reproach. Collateral to this, his judgment and opinions, even as a boy, were generally good, quickly formed, and determinedly carried out. Illustrative of this, and to

show the animus of his mind, the author will relate this incident. One day in the noon-day ball game he shouted to his comrade: "Don't be all day getting ready to strike, but strike, and strike to hit." This was so much like the noted declaration of Shakespeare, "Don't stand on the order of going but go," that the author never forgot it. These striking characteristics of his nature gave him pre-eminence in executive ability and enabled him to triumphantly carry out his undertakings to successful fruition, thus making himself famous the world over.

At this time, although but 15 years old, he was making his second trip across the plains as an ox teamster of one of the freight trains camped near by, and was returning from a hunt when he appeared in the scene just described. The Nortons now seemed transported into a new life, as it were, of joy and delight.



by the happy termination of this perilous incident. An enlarged feeling of kindness and good will, now seemed to have entered and taken possession of their hearts, for they now felt that God reigns in the hearts of men and that there should exist a feeling of benevolence and good will from one to another. Hence they were observed to have become more cheerful, friendly and pleasant.

Bill Cody and his chum, Enoch Allen, a genteel young man of twenty-one years, were never so welcome as now to a seat beside the camp fire or to a Sunday dinner with the Nortons.

But the tedious journey was soon to end ; the destination would be reached in a few days. A cut-off road to the gold diggings on Cherry Creek was now to be taken. Bill Cody and Enoch Allen visited the Nortons to bid them good-bye, for at this point they must take an-

other route, their destination being Salt Lake City. To the Nortons the parting was an affecting one, and so far as is known to the writer it was the last meeting between Bill Cody and Nora Norton.

The next week the train reached Cherry Creek, where the first gold had been washed out of its sands. Upon the banks of the stream a dozen or more mud huts had already been built. To the travel-worn people of the train the prospect for a home or fortune was a sad one. Gold was found in but limited quantities, and in but few places in the sand drifts in the channel of the creek. In no instance was the gold sufficient to pay for washing it out of the vast quantity of sand in which it was found. The ground was dry and sandy and almost destitute of vegetation.

General gloom and disappointment spread through the camp; some denounced the reports

as lies, and the reporters as liars and villains; some swore, others prepared with curses on their lips to return the next day. But the major portion of the people of the train scattered out and camped along the clear streams of water in the vicinity, both to rest themselves and to look over the country. There was no general method of doing; each one followed his own inclination in this matter. Some who had gone into the mountains returned for supplies and gave encouraging reports of gold discoveries, exhibiting as proof small nuggets of gold, while others showed fine or grain gold in quills, which formed convenient tubular bottles. This revived the drooping spirits of many and renewed their hopes. The Nortons, after a two weeks' rest, determined to go into the mountains on a prospecting tour. They had learned, however, from members of the train, that their friend, Enoch Allen, had abandoned

his purpose of going to Salt Lake City as a teamster and instead had bought a good outfit, and with an old friend for a companion had started into the mountains to prospect for gold. The usual outfit for these excursions into the mountains was a saddle horse and one or two pack animals, mules or donkeys, for transporting the provisions and camp fixtures. Had the Nortons gone into the mountains with an outfit of this sort, instead of a team and wagon, their sad misfortune would, perhaps, never have occurred, nor would this sad story ever have been told. But true it is, that the misfortunes of life are seldom foreshadowed, and, therefore, fall upon us when least expected.

The camp on Cherry Creek had now, after a fortnight, become much reduced. But few wagons and tents were now visible where dozens had been seen but a short time before. The Nortons now began their journey to the moun-

tains, but a few hours' travel distant. They soon reached the foothills which, figuratively speaking, are the baby mountains of the great Rocky Mountain range. Little Nora, and even her father, mother and uncle, were delighted with the grand scene now presented to view. Mountains of incomprehensible magnitude and height reached to the clouds. The solid granite rock, seamed, wrinkled and weather beaten, with sides cracked and torn asunder by the eruptive powers of the intense frost and cold of many winters, and the suns of many summers, adorned as they were with patches of green grass and clumps of bushes, vines and trees, the contemplation of which filled their minds with wonder.

The varied nature of the mountain scenery, its snow-capped peaks, water-cut channels, and crystal springs and streams, its evergreen forests and fragrant flowers, caused Nora, in an

ecstasy of joy, to exclaim: "Oh, father, camp here for a week, for everything is so pretty."

Her father replied: "Daughter, dear, we will have these pretty things, I hope, all through the mountains."

They continued their journey into the mountains, passing through Golden Gate, and following the gulch which has now become the road to Central City. Their progress was necessarily slow, for, though there was a visible trail made by horsemen and pack animals, no wagon as yet had passed over it. Often they were obliged to cut away brush or small trees in order to pass, or to dig away the banks of small streams to pass their wagon through them. Hence they traveled but a few miles a day.

As they advanced, the sides of the mountains bore evidence of the work of some mysterious and powerful force. Trees were seen raggedly

cut into, or cut off, as if by a canon ball. Upon closer investigation it was discovered that this was the work of immense rocks, which, loosened by frost, slid from their bases and rolled down the precipitous mountain side with a velocity and force which destroyed everything in their way.

Another striking phenomenon peculiar to the Rocky Mountains, showing the terrible power of the elements, is the heavy, almost pouring rains, termed by mountaineers, "cloud-bursts." The rain descends with such rapidity as to form, during its continuance, a sheet of water an inch or more deep over the mountain sides and hilltops, which rapidly flows into the mountain streams and gulches, filling them with turbulent, madly rushing waters, often five or six feet deep; thus forming a dangerous and death-dealing instrument to every living thing in its way.

As our travelers penetrated further into the higher and moister regions of the mountains, vegetation became more rank and the underbrush and trees more abundant, which materially interfered with their progress. The trail now led over a low, smooth mountain into a long, deep gulch, which they concluded to enter. After following this trail for a day they became aware that they were going astray, as indicated by their pocket compass, but they decided to continue in the same course.

In the morning of the next day "Uncle Drew," who was a good marksman, shouldered his gun and went in pursuit of some deer seen on the mountain side, saying that he would keep along the top of the mountain, in sight of the wagon. But, alas, how often do our wisest plans and fondest hopes fail! He soon came within gunshot of the deer, but only succeeded in crippling one; for it soon ran away, marking



its path with blood. He reloaded his gun and quickly followed the wounded animal, to get another shot, but as he passed near a clump of bushes, he was met face to face with a large she-bear and her young cubs. With a warning, hissing grunt she instantly sprang toward him. Standing on her hind legs, she made a circling stroke with her right paw, striking him on the left arm, knocking the half-elevated gun from his hands. The force of her blow was sufficient to knock him down, her sharp claws cutting and lacerating his arm and breast badly. She then seized him by the foot, biting through his boot and sinking her teeth deeply into his flesh. He tried to regain his feet, but could not, nor could he reach his gun, for she held his foot in a vise-like grip between her jaws.

Her cubs, now missing their mother, made a piteous call. Quickly releasing her hold she ran to them, but in a moment turned to renew

the attack. Drew had seized his gun in the interval and was now ready to receive her. Taking deliberate aim, he fired, and the huge animal lay at his feet in the throes of death. The cubs, on hearing the report of the gun, took fright and fled.

Weakened from pain and loss of blood, and unable to walk, Drew crept into the shade of a tree, out of the warm July sun, where he lay in an almost senseless state till the morning of the next day. Within an hour after Drew had left his brother and family, a dark, threatening cloud was seen to the right of the gulch in which they were traveling, clearly indicating, by the loud thunder and the bright flashes of lightning darting among the clouds, that a terrible rain or "cloud-burst" was imminent, although the sun was still shining brightly in the gulch, and all about was peace and quiet. Hence they felt no apprehension of danger, for Drew



### The Cloud-burst

"Mr. and Mrs. Norton now heard a loud noise, \* \* \* like the cracking of brush and timber, and a dull, roaring sound, like the rushing of a great river." Page 58



had gone away in the opposite direction, and all was pleasant, with sweet singing birds in the trees and bright colored flowers in bloom all around.

“Oh, mother,” said Nora, “let me get out of the wagon and gather some of those blue flowers.”

Her mother assenting, she was assisted to alight and began ascending the mountain upon which the flowers grew.

Her father drove the wagon quite slowly up the narrow gulch in order to enable her the sooner to overtake them. They had proceeded scarcely forty rods after Nora left them, when the still narrow gulch made a sharp turn round the corner of a high mountain.

Having made this turn, Nora and her parents were in such a position, with respect to the now intervening mountain, as to be entirely out of sight of each other. Mr. and Mrs. Norton

now heard a loud noise, seemingly a short distance from them up the gulch, like the cracking of brush and timber, and a dull, roaring sound like the rushing of a great river. They had no time for reflection, nor for action, for in an instant they saw, but a few rods before them, a sight which appalled them. The gulch had received the collected waters of the heavy rain or "cloud-burst" previously mentioned, and it was rushing rapidly down the steep gulch, four or five feet high, pushing rocks, logs and brush before it. Pent up by the resistance of this debris, and checked in its progress, it would raise itself still higher, break through it and fall forward like a tumbling wall, on whatever it met in its way.

Thus rolling and sweeping, with a roaring sound it came upon these unfortunate people like a mighty ocean wave. Hemmed in on both sides by steep mountains, escape was im-

possible. The avalanche of debris and water was now nearly upon them. The horses took fright, and becoming unmanageable, turned suddenly around, upsetting the wagon with its occupants. The horses fell, one upon the other, a cry of distress was heard from Nora's parents, and in another instant the deep cruel waters swept over all, burying them from sight forever.

Nora, still busily gathering flowers, knew nothing of the terrible death which her parents had met, so near to her, that but for the pitying arm of the mountain which intervened and hid them from her view she must have witnessed their tragic end.

From her position on the mountain side she heard the terrific roar of the water, and saw it rushing violently, in immense volumes, down the gulch below.

Seeing this immense stream of water, com-

ing from whence she could not tell, on so clear a day, she became alarmed, and ran up the gulch to find her father and mother whom, alas, she would never see again. She could advance but a short distance, for the mountain sides, in places, were nearly perpendicular, and the gulch was full, from side to side, with the rushing water. Filled with dread and anxiety, she sat down on a rock and wept, for she now feared the worst.

She thus sat, distressed by uncertainty and fear for some time, a melancholy object of pity, overwhelmed by the trouble which oppressed her heart. Arousing herself, however, from the stupor into which she had been cast by the fearful circumstances surrounding her, she observed that the water in the gulch was growing less, and it continued to decrease, till in another hour, it had dwindled down to a small stream. Nora then re-



sumed her search for her parents, but had not gone far when the gulch narrowed and presented such steep, precipitous falls, and was so full of huge scattered rocks that she knew no one could pass them. Then her heart sank within her; but she continued her search, hoping against fate. She noted the changed condition of the gulch. The water had dug away the earth in one place, and formed new banks of sand and earth in another; had filled up hollows and cut away ridges. Excitedly she ran up and down the gulch, shouting for her father, mother and her Uncle Drew in agonized tones of grief and despair.

Less than half a mile below where she had collected the flowers, she made a discovery which overwhelmed her with grief. She found remnants of her father's harness, a wheel of his wagon and a blanket lodged in the bushes and trees in the gulch. She also found the

dairy can containing her wardrobe and toilet articles which was strangely caught, and held by the broken limb of a tree, which was run through its handle. It rode upon the turbulent waters like a boat, owing to its iron ballasted bottom.

Listlessly, after examining it and finding her clothes dry, she hid it, scarcely knowing why, in the cavity of a mountain. In a further and more critical search of the gulch, she discovered the feet of one of the horses protruding from a newly formed bank of sand, the body evidently having been covered over in its formation. Remnants of the wagon were in like manner found projecting from another bank of sand, but nowhere did she find any evidence of the position of the bodies of her lost father or mother.

When knowledge of the death of her parents was thus made apparent to her, a sense

of the utter helplessness of her situation flashed upon her, and she was overcome by a violent fit of grief from which she could hardly free herself.

But the buoyant spirit and the cheerful nature of childhood is ever a comforting boon in the distress and helplessness of early life, and soothes the heart in trouble, and brings rest to the mind. So in this case Nora's mind, after an hour of deepest grief and gloom, found quiet and repose, for new hope brightened up her mind with cheering words of promise.

The sun was now descending in the west; the tall pines on the mountain tops and slopes were casting long, dark shadows over the mountain sides; waning day was bringing on the night which would close the saddest and most eventful day of Nora's life.

She climbed upon a huge granite rock, which seemed to offer her some safety for the night.

Standing there, and looking around anxiously, in the purity and innocence of childhood, with the birds singing their plaintive twilight song, and the gentle evening breeze sighing through the forest a sad sort of whispered prayer, she seemed more like one of the happy and blessed ones above than the sad and sorrowing ones of earth.

Feeling her helplessness now in this her time of great need, realizing the grandeur and incomprehensible immensity of the mountains as contrasted with herself, and inspired with a feeling of reverence for Him who created these wondrous hills and mountains, she dropped upon her knees, and seemingly in resignation to the chastening power of the Divine will raised her hands imploringly to heaven, and in prayer, besought God to look down upon her in mercy; to deliver her from the terrors and dangers which surrounded her;



Nora Alone in the Mountains

"She dropped upon her knees and  
raised her hands imploringly to  
heaven."

Page 64



prayed to Him to guide and protect her Uncle Drew from misfortune and death, and to direct his footsteps to her side; and that others be mercifully protected from the sorrows, and misfortunes which she that day had suffered. Then she lay down upon the rock, resigning herself to the bitter circumstances which controlled her, and which she could not alter. She soon fell into a quiet slumber. Exhausted nature brought to her weakened frame the refreshing sleep she so much needed.

It should be stated in connection herewith, for the information of those not acquainted with the peculiar atmospheric conditions of the Rocky Mountain region, that the frequency, and the destructive violence of floods of this sort have been much increased since its invasion by civilized man. For the Indian in his wisdom—grudgingly granted him—was a conservator of the mountain forests and of

nature in its primitive beauty. But the white man on the contrary with his wanton, wasteful forest fires, with the woodman's and lumberman's axe has almost completely shorn the mountains of their beautiful evergreen forests and many of their shrubs and flowers, thus leaving the ragged rocks bare, and grinning as it were, in mockery of this senseless work of destruction.

Seemingly, in chastening retaliation for this, and as if angered at the disturbance of their quiet solitude and repose, the mountains now hurl down their denuded sides and through their gulches, with increased violence and force, the outpour from the heavy water-laden clouds, unrestrained in its flow by neither bush, tree nor shrub, into the gulches below, thus forming in them immense rivers of water which rush down their steep, descending chan-



nels with indescribable fury and force, most terrifying to behold.

One of the most horrible of these floods, evidently largely augmented by these causes, occurred on the evening of July 4, 1896, at Morrison, in this state, extending north to Golden.

At this time of the year the mountains are filled with people from the cities who, with their children, are taking relief from the heat in the cool breezes of the mountains. On, and along the banks of Bear Creek, above Morrison, has always been a favorite resort for pleasure seeking outing parties. Upon these unwarned, helpless people in the darkness of midnight, without a moment's notice, came one of these floods, roaring like distant thunder, with a crack of breaking trees, and rumbling rocks. In a moment the flood, a rapidly advancing wall of water, boulders and drift-wood,

was upon them, carrying their summer dwellings and tents along, and crushing them like an egg shell. Many people sleeping in their beds were enveloped in its pitiless embrace, its titanic power crushing them down to the earth and burying them beneath its irresistible advance. It would be futile to attempt to describe in detail the horrors and frightful destruction of this terrific flood. Furthermore it would not be pleasing, because the horrors of a disastrous death awakens sympathy and brings sadness and sorrow to the heart.

Suffice it to say that the wall of water, retarded and held upward by timber, driftwood and brush, came rushing down the gulch more than ten feet high, tearing trees out of the earth, carrying away with it houses, barns and bridges, ploughing out great channels for itself and destroying everything in its path. A few escaped, some in a miraculous manner.

Little Irene Proctor was lifted into the air by a saving bush and thus held till her cries attracted heroic rescuers. Another saved his life by catching hold of a tree top and climbing to safety. In all twenty-five people lost their lives at Morrison on this occasion, mostly business and professional people from Denver. The two accomplished daughters of J. W. Horner, a Denver attorney, lost their lives in Mt. Vernon gulch, near, but north of Bear Creek. It required the combined labor of one hundred and seventy men and fifty horse teams for many days to repair the roads and bridges destroyed at Morrison by this awful flood.

The next morning the rising sun, shining in Nora's face, awoke her to a realization of her friendless condition, in a wild and unexplored mountain region. But feeling the pangs of hunger, and inspired by a spirit of determination and heroism, which the necessities of her

pitiable condition demanded, with a whispered prayer she firmly resolved to quit forever the sad scenes which surrounded her, and, if possible, find protection and friends. Taking the soiled blanket on her arm, excitedly, she started over the mountains, more in a run than a walk. Whence she knew not. Over tumbled, disordered piles of loose rock, through thickets of underbrush and dense pine forests she went, sometimes walking, sometimes running and panting like a frightened fawn, till from sheer exhaustion she was obliged to proceed more slowly.

Coming into a small opening in the forest, in a deep gulch of the mountains, she was delighted beyond expression, for upon the ground before her she beheld a feast of beautiful red mountain strawberries, of which she eagerly partook, and which gave her increased strength to continue her journey. She traveled up this

gulch for many miles, and at last was rewarded by a discovery which made her heart leap with joy. For she found blazed trees, the woodman's mark of a pathway in the forest, and other evidences of white men's work, for the Indians, then also roamed the mountains.

She was assured by these and other evidences that she was really on a trail made by people of her own race.

Increased hope and anxiety lightened her steps, and she hastily followed the course of the blazed line of the winding trail. At last she beheld with delight a miner's rude habitation or cave. It was situated in the mountains, as near as can be now ascertained, in the forest somewhere on Bear Creek above Evergreen, southwest of Bergen Park. It was an excavation in the mountain side, built up with round logs. The roof consisted of small poles covered with pine boughs, which in turn were

covered with earth. The back part of the cave was thus no higher than the side of the mountain at that point against which it was built. (This circumstance occasioned a strange incident, to be related hereafter.) The door was peculiar. To explain this queer door, more clearly, it should be stated that in cutting out the logs for the door they were sawed off with a double bevel, the saw track forming the letter V and the cut ends of the door logs were thus in the shape of obtuse wedges. For at that time, locks and hinges, except of wood, were not to be had, for the early pioneer carried nothing with him but the important necessities of life.

This fact somewhat explains the origin of the hospitable and prevalent custom of that day among miners and cattle men of leaving their cabins open to the wanderer and the stranger, for they could not lock them. Earth formed



"A Feast of Mountain Strawberries"

Page 70





the floor, mud and logs the walls; a small hole in the wall served as a window.

Into this rude habitation Nora cautiously entered and found flour, matches, bacon, coffee, sugar, salt and, also pans and other light cooking utensils in use in camp life. She also found a notice scribbled on the wall with charcoal which read: "*Eat, but steal not.*" She inferred from this admonition that the owners of this rude habitation were of a kindly disposition, and that they contemplated returning at some future time for their provisions.

It should be here stated that in sparsely settled portions of the west this generous and humane custom prevails to this day among the cowboys and miners. They leave their cabins open to the "cattlemen" and wandering gold miner, who thus find food and shelter in the absence of the "boss," who may be from

home and he perhaps finds food and shelter in the hospitable cabin of a stranger in like manner.

The sad spirit of poor Nora now was made hopeful in the thought that she at some future time perhaps would be rescued from the terrors which surrounded her on all sides. For Indians, bears and mountain lions then existed in abundance in the mountains.

So she wisely concluded to wait for the return of the unknown occupants of the cabin, for she felt instinctively that she could never find her way out of the mysterious and unknown regions of the mountains unaided. She therefore made a fire, and cooked, and ate her first sad and lonely meal. And thus a melancholy life of solitude was begun by her in a wild region, and in a stranger's cabin.

When she had finished her repast, and cleared the table of its queer assortment of

dishes, which consisted mostly of tinware, cups, spoons, plates, a case knife, and a steel hunter's knife, she sat down upon a large rock, evidently designed for a seat, and looked around to ascertain the best means to make her enforced home in the cabin endurable. She observed that two round pine logs of suitable lengths placed in the corner of the cabin formed the side, and end of a bunk, the other side and end being formed by the side and end of the cabin. It was filled with dry grass as a substitute for a mattress. There was also a table, but a queer one it was. A sheet, or slab of bark, cut and carefully peeled from a green tree, pressed flat, and dried in the sun, smooth and flat as a board, formed its top. It was three feet wide by four feet long, and was supported by four large rocks. But it flashed upon her mind that she had no change of linen, nor would her well worn dress last her long.

She arose from her seat excitedly as she realized this, and walked the room in deep study. She finally concluded that she needed clothing and must have it at all hazards. She knew that if she could secure the dairy can containing her wardrobe from the cavern in the mountain where she had hid it, that she could pass the time in the cabin with tolerable comfort. But it was a fearful and perilous task for her to attempt the trip unguided and alone. But she made up her mind to do so, come what would. For woman's love of dress is to her a meed of praise or the open door, leading down to the lowly walks of shame, dishonor, and death. Therefore, casting all thoughts of danger aside, she started next morning on her perilous journey, taking with her, however, a small lunch. She followed the trail which had guided her to the cabin, back to the foot of a high mountain, where it terminated. For this

mountain, now known as Big Chief, adjacent to Bergen Park, was a guide point, because it stands high above the others, and can be easily found, therefore the blazed trees, or trail, began at this mountain and lead to this cabin. From this place Nora succeeded in finding her way, for she recognized many of the mountains which she had previously passed, which aided her very much in arriving at the scene of her great misfortune. She viewed it again with a deeply troubled heart, and made a short search to find what she could; but no additional object was found. So hastily taking hold of the heavy dairy can containing her clothing, she started upon her return journey, sometimes carrying it, sometimes dragging it over the gravelly soil, like a sled, by its handle, till she reached again her cabin door.

The reader can better imagine, than could be described, the sorrow, the dread and anx-

lèty of little Nora during this time. But once during this time did she feel the dangers and terrors of her situation, although at no time did she feel safe. On this occasion she wrapped herself in her blanket and retired for the night, as usual. Stretching herself out on her rude pallet of soft pine twigs, she soon fell into a quiet sleep, but some time during the night she heard a rumbling noise overhead, like heavy footsteps on the weak, trembling roof. This both awoke and alarmed her. Suddenly, with a crash, some huge object came down through the roof and dropped beside her. For a moment she thought it was a rock from the high mountain which had rolled down its side and crashed through the frail roof. But no, it was a living animal of some sort, for its sniff of the air, and its loud, excited breathing filled her heart with fear and trembling. Its warm, strong breath, which beat often heavily

into her face, increased her fright, for she thus knew that it was a large animal, perhaps a grizzly bear. Her situation was now one of intense excitement and terror, and scarcely endurable. But with a fortitude, born of self-reliance and determination, she bore up under this excitement until morning, when she saw by the first light of dawning day that the cause of her alarm was an innocent work-ox that had strayed away from its owner, and wandered onto the roof, which was too weak to bear his weight, and he broke through, dropping a distance of but seven feet to the floor below and thus frightening our young heroine out of her wits. It was not a difficult task to drive him out of the cabin. When outside he started off bellowing, in search of his mate, while Nora engaged herself in the work of repairing the damage to her domicile; for having been reared on a farm, she was capable of doing much of

the outdoor work of boys or men. She could fish, trap rabbits or grouse with the skill of a hunter, in which she often engaged, and fortunately, while in this solitude, with advantageous results.

The possession of these rude accomplishments, fishing and hunting, were the source of much pleasure to her in her solitude and isolation. By engaging in them she was thus beguiled into a new line of thought, and into a forgetfulness of her condition. Thus was the tedium of time and the weary watching and waiting during many a dull day lightened and lifted from her mind. The pleasing excitement of these pursuits also brightened her mind with the light of joy, like rays of light through a cloud-covered sky. Indeed she became fascinated, and attached to this sort of recreation and pastime. But as she possessed a bright mind of diversified qualities, she was enabled



to pursue various other sources of amusement. One of these was efforts of a literary nature, and the composition of short poems, one of which is presented :

#### NORA'S SOLILOQUY.

Oh, solitude, banish the gloom, which disturbs my breast,  
And tell me, oh, tell me, why I'm oppressed  
With dread, and with fear, and full of alarm,  
And why thy grandeur, to me, is void of a charm?

Thy silence is dreary, and hard to endure  
While I wander about, and seek for its cure,  
In the midst of the forest, along the bright stream,  
Where fishes are skipping, so happy they seem.

And the gay, feathered songsters, on perches above  
Are sending up music, to God, for his love.  
While leaflet, and limb, of the majestic trees,  
Fanned by the breeze, make music to please.

And the voice of the stream, as it rushes along,  
Yields up its music, and grants me a song,  
Though sweet be the songs of bird, brook and tree,  
They are sad to my heart—dull music to me.

They fill me with anguish, for in them I see  
The cause of their joy, and not any for me.  
I shrink from the view, in gloom and vexation,  
For I'm but a speck in God's pondrous creation;

And a victim of force s, controlling the world  
As seen in flood-waters, or lava of volcanos hurled.  
How, then, can I be merry, while lost, and alone,  
Homeless and friendless, and the future unknown?  
For watching and waiting is distressing to me;  
Oh how I long for its ending—I pray it soon be.

But as all things of this world have a termination, so Nora's exile was approaching its end. Snow had now clothed the high mountain peaks in white, though none had fallen in the narrow gulch where Nora dwelt, but the keen frost of September had touched the leaves of the aspen and wild-raspberry, and they were falling in showers to the ground. These signs of approaching winter instead of diminishing her hope, as one would suppose, rather increased it, for with the sound reasoning of one

of more mature years, she felt sure that the proprietors of the provisions and cabin would surely return now for their store of winter supplies, deposited there, perhaps, to lighten the loads of their pack animals while they traveled over the almost impassable mountains in search of rich gold mines. This view of the matter was correct, for on the 5th day of October of the year 1860, a memorable day to her, she met with an episode and, though not unexpected, it was none the less exciting. She had been out that day hunting and fishing. The fish she caught with a dip net, made of strips of strong willow bark; the rabbits and grouse with snares or loops of the same, set where they resort, into which they ran, and were thus caught. She had that day caught two grouse and was cooking them over a gentle fire, and had stepped outside the door to go for a pail of water, when she heard dis-

tinctly these words, while her heart rapidly beat with joy :

“Say, pard, would it not be a joke on us if the mountain rats and gophers have eaten up all our grub.”

“No, it would be a greater joke to find it there, for we did not think of the voracious mountain rats when we left, and it is but reasonable to think they have destroyed it.”

Nora stood as one in a trance. She heard footsteps approaching, and saw glimpses of dusky figures through the thick pines. As they came nearer she saw that they were two rough-looking white men, in ragged clothing, with lengthy unshaven beards, and long uncut hair. They drove before them two mules laden with blankets, picks, shovels and other articles pertaining to a miner's life.

When they saw her standing there pail in hand, they were more surprised than she. But

as they came close to her, a puzzled smile came upon the face of one of them, and he said excitedly:

"Oh, Nora, what brought you here, and are you alone?"

Nora looked upon him with surprise and wonder, and gave him a searching look.

"Sad and in sorrow am I, yes, alas! alone."

"Alone," said Nora, as she broke down under a spasm of grief, realizing the true meaning, to her, of the word, "alone."

And she wept, as women often weep, from the high excitement and emotions of the occasion. For there was much to disturb and harass her mind. She did not know the character of the men, whether honorable or not. She would now have to relinquish her independence, and appeal to them for guardianship and care, and for just and fair treatment, for she was now in their power.

These considerations agitated her much as she looked upon these two strange men with that insecurity which the absence of knowledge yields.

Feeling, however, that friendly regard, and respectful confidence, will win favor, and permitting her mind to reach out to them with trusting hope, she therefore, while they unpacked, and turned their mules out to graze, explained to them her sad situation, told them of her misfortune, of the death of her parents and of the probable death of her Uncle Drew by some wild animal, and closed by asking earnestly :

“Who are you?”

“Why, Nora, is it possible that you do not recognize me yet? I am Enoch Allen, whom you met on the plains and a true friend to you now in your time of greatest need, for my

sympathy is drawn out to you by the affecting recital of your misfortune and sorrow."

"Oh, will you be a friend to me?" she said imploringly, as she flung her arms around his body in trusting hope. "And will you be a father to me, and take me out of these terrible mountains?"

"Yes, Nora," he said, as sympathetic tears glistened in his eyes, "I will give you a father's care and protection."

They then entered the cabin, and while an exceedingly pleasant conversation was entered into, and mutual explanations were made, Nora, with cheerful face and pleasing smile, and with a skill and grace not to be expected of one of her years, completed the preparations of the meal already begun. As they partook of this pleasant repast of mountain grouse and trout and pancakes, it seemed that never could people be more happy than they then were. In

reply to an apology, made by Nora for appropriating his provisions to her own use, Enoch said: "Reproach yourself not, Nora, for you had no choice in the matter, and I would not be human to blame you for what you could not avoid; and besides I think you deserve more praise than blame, for your présence in the cabin has doubtless protected the provisions from the depredations of rats and gophers. Having been favored by fortune in my search for gold, being now the possessor of one of the best mines in Russel Gulch, near Central City, and being possessed of plenty, I will 'whack up' with you, as miners say, and furnish you with the necessary means to educate yourself at one of the best academies in St. Louis, and will see you safely out of this lonely place, provided, however, that you will accept my proposition with the generous untrammelled freedom with which it is made, and that you will in no





Nora Returning from the Brook

"The fish she had caught with  
a dip net, made of strips of  
strong willow bark."

Page 83



wise feel humiliated by its acceptance, nor be grieved by becoming a dependent upon my benefactions, and a debtor in a sum which you are now powerless to pay."

"Oh, Enoch," she replied, "friend that you now prove yourself to be to me, speak not thus, for your language fills my mind with contending thoughts and emotions, which my poor words have not the power to clearly express. Besides you know that I am lost and forlorn, bound to this spot, for I know not the way out. I am at your mercy, for good or for ill, and therefore can not refuse your offer, whatever it be, or however disagreeable to me."

"Nora, the fine impulses of your nature," said Enoch Allen, "awaken thoughts in your mind which should lie dormant. They fill your troubled heart with entanglements and difficulties which may never arise, and should not be considered at this melancholy time, there-

fore to persuade you, if possible, to its acceptance, I will now withdraw all its conditions, and will make it again, pure and simple, and will grant to time and the nobility of your nature to wear away the difficulties which disturb your mind. For what I offer to do for you is but a simple act of Christian equity, in line with the golden rule, which means assistance to those in distress, as assistance should be given us if in like need. Assistance, if given at all, should surely come from abundance and not from poverty's purse. I therefore feel that it is surely due from me to you, notwithstanding the scruples you have in this matter, to make you this offer. For in accordance with these views I owe you a debt in Christian equity, and after its payment we but stand as equals under the moral law, each to each. Besides, viewing this matter in another way, we have, through the providence of God, or by

the fateful circumstances that control the destinies of men for weal or for woe, been brought to, and placed in, the most striking circumstances with relation to each other. You, cast down into the depths of inexpressible misery and despair by the loss of your parents, and all else that was dear to you, and that made life worth living, while I, with no great effort of my own, but rather by the benevolence of good luck, have been made happy beyond expression by the discovery of a gold mine of inestimable wealth. I think, therefore, as we both have started out together in pursuit of the same object, and as we have been companions in the hardships, dangers and discomforts of travel on the plains, and though you have been lost and forlorn on the way, you still should rightfully out of our mutually acquired wealth, receive *salvage*, which is the reward due each member composing a company who performed

an undertaking full of danger. Under the *maritime laws* of both England and the United States, salvage is due each member of a party in an adventure, not for any distinct performance of a member of the party, but for the successful performance of the whole. In accordance with this well accepted law, you, Nora, are entitled to a share of my good luck."

Nora, in response, said:

"Enoch, kind sir, I cannot fully comprehend the fine sense of right which you maintain should prevail among mankind, nor do I feel competent to give a logical answer to these sublime and intricate questions of moral law. I therefore prefer to meditate seriously on them in silence, and I can only say you are too kind. I can never repay you, nor can I find words that will tell you how grateful I am for your interest in me."

"I seek not gratitude, nor words of thanks."

said Enoch, "but rather the approval of my head and heart; and therefore freely give to others a part of what has been bestowed on me by the wise Dispenser of this world's blessings."

It was arranged, therefore, that his partner or "pard," as he termed him, should transport the provisions to the mine, while Enoch would visit his relatives and friends near St. Louis during the winter, and return in the spring to continue his work in the mines. He would thus be enabled to conduct Nora safely out of danger and place her in school, as he had so generously proffered to do. Next morning the two mules were loaded with their packs, one for Denver, already a little village, the other for the mines of North Clear Creek in Russel Gulch.

Enoch seated Nora on the pack, while he walked, driving the well-laden animal along,

as is the custom of miners. At Denver he and Nora took the stage for Omaha, where they boarded the cars for St. Louis, where Nora was to enter St. Mary's Academy, under the watchful and motherly care of the Sisters of that institution.

As Nora was now to receive her education in a Catholic sisterhood, and as she may be affected more or less by its environment, and as these educational institutions are now receiving constantly increasing patronage, many prominent Protestants select them as the most fitting institutions for the education of their daughters, it is pertinent to know something of the inner life and rules governing them. They are organized communities of women, under systematic laws regulating their government, designed to perform religious duties, or do work of charity or benevolence.

Each takes a solemn vow, considered as sa-



cred as an oath, when admitted to the community, to do special religious work, thus the Sisters of Charity are pledged to engage in the vast work which their name implies. The Sisters of the Good Shepherd are pledged to be shepherds in fact, to care for the lambs, the girls, that they go not astray, and keep and guide them in the path of virtue and away from sin. The Little Sisters of the Poor furnish a home for the aged and helpless poor, while others are pledged to perform educational work, imparting religious knowledge to the young, inculcating into their minds honor and reverence to God, and disciplining their young minds in manners and morals.

To enable them to carry out these benevolent purposes, unrestrained and untrammelled, they are pledged solemnly to celibacy, whereby they may devote their care to this work, rather than to a husband and family.

The pledge of celibacy carries with it many subsidiary requirements. The celibate is admonished to walk the streets with modest, down-cast eyes, not to talk with men, only as necessity requires, nor engage in jocular nor frivolous talk. These observances followed for years as near as weak human nature can yield to them, establishes a modest and attractive manner in the Catholic Sisters always discernible. For modest and dignified grace is a crown and glory in lovely women far surpassing in value gold or a jeweled crown. No wonder then, that Martin Luther, in the grossness of sin, cast away his priestly robes, and heedless of his sacred vow, married a nun and originated a religion, not named after any divine person, but named after himself, and which finally unscrupulous kings found in it pretended excuse for strife and war, and an apparent cause for the appropriation of the

church property by an act of sequestration, a polite name for theft.

Therefore, Nora, surrounded by the modesty and Christian grace of the sisters, could not but be influenced, and her manners modified and shaped, by their refined christian deportment. It will be shown further on how her dignity and refined manners affected Enoch Allen.

It is not necessary to enter into any detailed account of Nora's life while in the academy, but it must be said of her that she made rapid progress in her studies, due to diligent application and perseverance. She felt that she should conscientiously use what was bestowed upon her for a special purpose, and that to do otherwise would be a wrong to her benefactor. Thus inspired by a sense of duty, and being possessed of a bright intellect, she be-

came one of the brightest students at the school.

Before Enoch Allen returned to Colorado in the spring he paid a visit to Nora. Again she scarcely recognized him, for the barber and clothier had so wonderfully changed his personal appearance that he seemed no longer the same. He was both genteel and well mannered, having a mind disciplined to adapt itself to any condition of life. He again assured Nora that he would fulfill his promise and furnish her the means to acquire an education, and begged her to quiet her modest reluctance in accepting so much from him. "It is but a trifle," he said, "as compared with the vast sum realized from my mine, and I will never miss so small a sum." As his mine proved, year after year, to be one of the most productive in Russel Gulch, the yearly remittances for Nora's tuition and expenses were, in fact,

as he had said, a trifle to him. He was now a wealthy man, and made occasional visits to his relatives at St. Louis, and on these occasions never failed to call on Nora. It was but natural that a feeling of strong friendship should attract them one to the other, for friendship and love spring not from senseless impulse or passion, but from the mutual appreciation of the good qualities and character of each other.

Nora was now twenty years old, when woman is in the prime of her beauty, in form and face divine, and is then ever a source of pleasure to behold.

Days, months and years had passed, till now Nora had entered upon her fourth and last year at school, and excepting the necessary "shopping" and a few picnic excursions, Nora had never been out of school during all this time. She, therefore, longed for the open fields, the hills and valleys, the wild flowers and sweet

song birds of country life. These pleasant scenes of her childhood were dear to her, and she longed to enjoy them again. An opportunity to do so was now unexpectedly granted her, through the generosity and kindness of two of her old school mates, who offered her the hospitality of their home and a free passage thereto. This she thankfully accepted and communicated her intentions to Enoch Allen in Colorado. These two young ladies and Nora were great friends during the long years of their school life. Indeed, from their very first acquaintance they were attracted to each other by some influential power or affinity. They became strong and steadfast friends, advised with each other on the trivial vexations and troubles of schoolgirl life. They never seemed more happy than when together, engaged in the animated and innocent prattle which school-girls so much delight in. They all entered

school at the same time. They were sisters, and though possessing the family name of Norton, were as different from Nora Norton as day is from night. Their complexions were very dark, cheek bones high, eyes dark as a crow's wing, and hair as dark and straight as an Indians; indeed it was whispered among their schoolmates that they were half breeds, but, as two Mexican pupils were as dark as they, with similar cast of features, little was said or thought of the matter. The name of the elder one was Minnie, and the younger one was Annie. Their home was at Fort Laramie, in Wyoming Territory, and because of that circumstance they were supposed to be daughters of an army officer on duty there. They were esteemed by their classmates, being courteous and pleasant to all, and possessing abundant means to meet every need. Indeed they had been so liberally supplied with money that they were

amply able to purchase the railroad and stage tickets for themselves and Nora to their home at Fort Laramie, Wyoming Territory.

Fort Laramie, on a tributary of the Platte of that name, was at that time a small frontier post of considerable importance, where several companies of soldiers were stationed to keep the Ute and Cheyenne Indians under control. The officers dwelt in neat frame houses, the soldiers had good quarters, and all lived a life of leisure and pleasure, "Uncle Sam" paying the bills. The sutler, the merchant of the post, besides furnishing the post with tobacco, liquors and other goods at a vast profit, also supplied the Indians with sugar, bacon, crackers, powder, lead, etc., at extortionate prices, often trading a pound of sugar for a tanned buckskin worth a dollar, or 75 cents worth of ammunition for a dressed buffalo robe, worth \$5. Thus do Indians, under



the care of the agents and officers of the government, see and feel the nobility of civilization, a double-edged sword of injustice which robs them of their means of existence and fills them with misery and despair. And thus it was that the sutler, appointed by the government, and, therefore, secure from any competition, was enabled in a short time to become immensely wealthy. He resided in one of the most beautiful houses of the Fort, and even at that time it had all the style of an eastern mansion. But there is a custom in connection with his life, as well as that of nearly all Indian traders, which must not be omitted in this narration.

They, as a rule, are married to squaws, and thus they are, in a measure, adopted into the tribe, and are considered by the Indians as friends to be trusted. It should also be stated that these white men, or "squaw men," thus

connected by marriage feel more safe among the Indians. It is said that a white man's life among the Indians would not be safe unless he thus connected himself with the tribe. A strange feature of such a marriage is that the would-be bridegroom usually buys his wife for so much merchandise, or a pony. The terms and conditions of the trade are easy. The giving away of the bride and the marriage consist of a feast and a dance of joy—all as simple and rude as a child's play at school.

Hence the sutler at Fort Laramie had likewise long since married a squaw, and had two well-grown half breed daughters whom he had himself taught to read in early life; but, desiring to give them the advantage of a thorough education, now that he was wealthy, he planned to send them to some eastern seminary.

It is worthy of note, before proceeding further, to describe the wonderful change

wrought upon the squaw-wife by her marriage to a white man, that instead of the slovenly, unclean condition of her maidenhood, she becomes a comparatively clean and orderly housekeeper. Unlike many women of a higher civilization who esteem their haughty independence so highly that it becomes rank injustice, the squaw-wife has a watchful care, and kindly regard for the pleasure and comfort of her husband. This is mainly due to the family rule in Indian strict life obedience and respect for parental authority; not resistance, but assent to it; not opposition, but compliance with it. This rule, perhaps too strenuous in savage life, is too lax in civilized life.

As many of the army officers' wives and families had now come to reside at the Fort, and as his wealth and position drew around him refined people, and his squaw-wife could never assimilate nor associate with them with any de-

gree of pleasure to either, she seemed to him to be in the way. He therefore planned and put into execution what others before him had done—the most melancholy act of this anomalous marriage. He told his wife, for he had learned to speak the Indian language, that she must return to her tribe; that she could no longer dwell under his roof; that he would send their daughters away to school, and that she, too, must go.

Then, moved by strong and tender love for her children, she ran in frantic grief to the lawn, where they were at play. Seizing the elder one, in endearing tones she cried: “O, Minetah!” which was her Indian name, and wept over her and in a similar manner grieved over Annetah, her younger child.

Regardless of her remonstrance and tears, and unmoved by her pitiful appeals for justice and the right to abide with and enjoy the com-

forting companionship of her children, the next day he placed her on a pony, with provisions and blankets, and started her off alone, many miles, to seek the camp of her tribe. Though untutored as she was she felt the great wrong to herself of leaving all behind her. She wept all the way, and her loud sobs and wail of sorrow were heard when she was a long distance off. Her children were also in the deepest grief at the loss of their mother. The whole proceeding was extremely sad. But the father's will is the law of the family in Indian as well as in civilized life, whether right or wrong, but it is nevertheless often unjust.

As a soldier had been detailed to the sutler as cook and housekeeper by the commanding officer of the post, the absence of their mother did not affect their personal comfort, but it took from them a mother's sympathy, society and companionship.

Before their departure for school, behold one evening their mother returned on the same pony, after an absence of but two weeks. With tears and entreaties she humbly plead to live and die near her children, for her tribe now treated her with scorn and indifference. Her husband yielded in a measure to her entreaties, for he was not at heart a bad man, but was rather the creature of circumstances. It was agreed that she should live alone in a tent near his house, the abode of her children, and that he would supply all her wants, which were few. This delighted her children, for they could thus call in to see their mother ever day. And it should be said that their squaw-mother really enjoyed these periodical visits more than her daughters, for what mother's heart is not full of joy when her children are playfully romping around her? Time did not hang heavily upon her, because

the visits of her children were sunshine to her heart. Now, left to herself in her abode she dropped back to many of the ways of savagery. She preferred a seat upon an open robe to a chair, bed of blankets to a mattress, and her hair loose, hanging down, than done up. As a whole her life was now comparatively happy. To pass the time away, like her more cultured sisters, she engaged in fancy work, making beaded slippers, belts and baskets, which she lovingly bestowed upon Minnie, Annie and her husband.

Soon after this episode the girls were placed on an eastbound stage coach, in care of a returning officer, and taken to an eastern school.

They made annual returns in vacation to see their father and mother. They had their father's consent to invite a schoolmate to visit and remain with them during vacation, but never found one at liberty or willing to un-

dertake so distant, or so arduous a trip. But now they wrote to their father that after graduating they would bring with them to their far western home a dear friend and school-mate, friendless and alone in the world, to make a long visit with them. They had communicated to their father the date of their departure and he was, therefore, at the Overland Stage station when they arrived. His two daughters were first on the landing, and after greeting their father, they introduced him, saying: "Father, Miss Nora Norton."

He looked upon her in a sort of bewildered surprise, not recognizing her, however, as any one he had previously seen, he received her with a smile rather than with words. But Nora, with that keen discernment and quick decision common to womankind, gave him an earnest, searching look, and recognizing him as her uncle "Drew," she raised her hands ex-



citedly in the air as the blood rushed to her head and heart from the impulse of the shock, then she ran to him with open arms saying: "Oh, Uncle Drew, do you not know Nora, your niece?" and fell into his arms in a swoon.

And thus Nora and her uncle met so unexpectedly after each had mourned the other as dead.

When Nora regained consciousness a series of explanations were entered into by both, by which each was made acquainted with the sad events in the life of the other, after they had separated so unexpectedly in the gulch in the mountains. Drew told Nora of his fight with the bear; how he lay under a tree all night, and next morning, after eating some of the meat of the bear he had killed, how he had felt increased strength, and after providing himself with some meat for the trip, started

to overtake his brother and family, but on entering the gulch where he had left them the day before and seeing its torn-up condition, and finding his brother's hat and remnants of his wagon, and the horse previously mentioned, and after giving the gulch a thorough search for a long distance along its channel, and finding no traces of his brother and family, and being well acquainted with the destructive power of a cloud burst, he concluded that all his brother's family had been drowned, and he, therefore, made his way back to the camp on Cherry Creek, where he took the Overland stage for his home at Fort Laramie.

He gave as a reason for withholding a knowledge of his business and family relations from his brother and his family that he feared a rebuke from his brother, who knew nothing of the necessity of his marrying a squaw, and

he would, therefore, doubtless condemn him for it.

Nora told her Uncle Drew the long, sad story of her parents' terrible death and of her lost and sad condition in the lonely cabin; of her rescue, and of the generosity of her benefactor. Her uncle was much affected, and said, excitedly:

"I will bestow upon him a small fortune for those inestimable acts of benevolence to you."

Nora said: "His proud and noble spirit could never be made to yield to an acceptance of a reward for what he finds a pleasure and delight in doing," replied Nora. "Besides, uncle, he is 'the architect of his own fortune,' having made it in the gold mines of Colorado.

"He is a nobleman, truly," said her uncle, "and I would be too glad to meet him and

thank him personally, but you have not made known to me his name."

"You have met him once or twice at our camp fire on the plains. His name is Enoch Allen."

Ah, yes; I remember him. Write to him, Nora, and convey to him my desire to see him, and the pleasure it would afford me for him to visit us."

"It is already arranged, uncle," she said. He will soon be here; but he does not know who you are—nor did I expect so strange a surprise."

"Well," said her uncle, "he will receive a hearty welcome when he comes and be an honored member of our household, esteemed for his great kindness to you. And Nora, you shall ever have a permanent home with us now."

Nora earnestly thanked him for this evidence

of his affection for her. She now felt at home in her uncle's house, and as Minnie and Annie were dear to her before, they seemed more dear to her, now that she knew they were her cousins. She often went into the tent to see their mother, who exhibited much affection for them, and they on these occasions seemed very fond of her.

Their mother addressed them as Minetah and Annetah, which they modified into Minnie and Annie when they entered the academy.

A fortnight after Nora's arrival at the Fort, Enoch Allen arrived, which was the occasion again of rejoicing and congratulations. Nora, now so unexpectedly having found a home among loved ones, was as happy as mortal could well be. Her heart, at one time weighed down by heavy sorrow, made life seem to her scarcely worth the living, but now, on the contrary, in the midst of the beauty around her,

with loving friends as cheerful companions, and with a heart full of joy, she rejoiced that life was a blessing of such inexpressible worth. She now longed to see Enoch, to tell him of her great joy and rehearse to him some of the incidents connected with her dreary, isolated life in the cabin, which, for want of time, and a suitable opportunity at the convent, she had never told him.

As no definite day had been fixed upon for the arrival of Enoch Allen, Nora and her uncle took occasional walks to the station at "coach time," in the hope of meeting him, which they did on an incoming coach a fortnight after Nora's arrival at her uncle's. Nora scarcely recognized him in his neat-fitting suit of black, covering his robust and shapely form. As he alighted from the coach, she eagerly approached him, and with a refined manner and dignity she gracefully extended to him her

welcoming hand, and as he took it in his, in tones well spoken, and seemingly as sweet to him as the sounds of a sweet song bird, she said :

“Enoch Allen, my most esteemed friend, I grasp your hand with a feeling of gratitude and respect, for I have been an undeserving recipient of your substantial generosity, and therefore it delights me highly to meet you, and express to you my gratitude.”

Looking upon her with admiration and delight, he replied : “Nora, the melody of your voice, the readiness with which you speak, and the beauty of your language, please and charm me, which is ample reward to me for the little I have done for you, for by your studious industry at the academy, my paltry and voiceless gold has adorned you with an eloquence and beauty of speech more sweet than music itself, therefore let your mind repose in peace ; for it

has benefited you and done me no harm, for I have an abundance of money—beyond my needs.”

Nora, in the excitement of her interview with Enoch, and during this interesting colloquy with him, had overlooked or forgotten her uncle, who stood near by listening, and waiting. Looking around, she saw him, whereupon she informally introduced Enoch. Her uncle took him cordially by the hand, and said :

“It is a pleasure to me to meet you—you who have been so generous a benefactor to my most unfortunate niece. I appreciate your kindness, and hope to reward you, or reciprocate the favor, at some future time.”

“I would degrade myself in my own conscious knowledge of my duty, did I not respond to the cry of distress and reach out a helping hand to the unfortunate, and helpless to aid them to arise,” modestly replied Enoch. “The



beasts of the field and the birds of the air fly to their companions in distress, to give battle and protect them in their helpless need. I would have been less than one of these had I not, out of my vast, inflowing abundance, given assistance to your worthy niece."

Nora, hearing these tender and noble words come from the lips of Enoch, was moved by emotions of gratitude, and her eyes filled with tears, and she wept as women often weep, from uncontrollable excitement. The scene was an affecting one as they stood together, Nora in the acme of the superlative beauty of early womanhood, adorned by educational accomplishments, and Enoch Allen, in the grandeur of robust manhood, was an interesting sight to behold.

"Enoch, your words are wisely spoken, and manifest a generous disposition and a nobility of character which awakens my admiration,

and wins my love and respect," said her uncle.

The conversation was of too exciting a nature for Nora to enjoy or endure, so she remarked, before Enoch had time to reply: "Let us go to the house," which they all did.

Entering the parlor, an artistically and elaborately furnished room, Nora's uncle pointing to a luxuriant easy chair, while she gracefully relieved him of his hat, offered an apology for temporary absence on the plea of personal business, and left Enoch and Nora together alone, as it may be supposed, to their great satisfaction. It is needless to say that a woman is always the first to break an oppressive silence, when alone with the man she admires and respects. So it was in this case. Nora, with the fertility of a trained mind, gracefully broke the silence and charmed the ears of Enoch by the eloquent and captivating manner of her recital of the exciting incidents of her life. As she

related incident after incident in detail of her striking adventures, of the stringency of her environment, and how her ingenuity enabled her to overcome them, Enoch, an attentive and interested listener, seemed to be entranced by the charm of her manner. The ready flow of her well-chosen words falling from her lips, the melody of her well-modulated voice, and the charming modesty resting in her eyes and on her brow, the crown of glory over all, won Enoch's regard and he had to admit to himself that Nora possessed a mind of marvelous power. His admiration of her intellectual qualities gained his favor, and thus was dullness and inattention aroused into pleasing action. Then the little midget, love, found easy access, and a hiding place within the inner recesses of his heart. Her personal charms, and brilliant accomplishments, spread their captivating influence around him. He became an

•

easy victim to its potent power, and he felt himself drawn with tenderness toward Nora. His heart was inspired with strong love for her. But to explain this condition of his heart to her was a serious matter to him, for she had always been more a child to him than an equal, to whom he might talk of love, and he had always seemed more like a father to her. Nevertheless, he formed a resolution to make known to her his affection and love for her, which had irresistibly found its way into his mind and heart. He awaited a favorable opportunity with pleasurable suspense. As they frequently strolled out together for a walk, or to view the soldiers on parade, or to see them go through the manual of arms, the opportunity was not long in presenting itself.

One day, while sitting on a long summer seat in the shade of a large tree, viewing the soldiers on dress parade, going through the

beautiful changes of the march, Enoch Allen remarked to Nora: "That is a pleasing sight to behold."

"I aver it is, and it shows the grand results of educational training," answered Nora.

"Truly said," replied Enoch. "But beauty is not alone a source of joy. I venture to say that these soldiers are neither content nor happy."

"They appear to be, but appearances are often deceiving," said Nora. "As their daily service is well understood, they are free from care, responsibility, and the vexation of a business life, and should therefore be extremely happy."

"Ah! Nora! These are insufficient to satisfy the requirements of the active, intelligent mind of man. It requires pleasing employment to cheer and make it happy, for idleness is nothing. It is the absence of everything."

"Enoch, you speak so seriously, so solemnly, that I suppose you are gloomy today."

"Nora, your surmises are not far wrong, for my mind is filled with a sort of trouble."

"Enoch Allen, friend of mine that you are, tell me what troubles you, that I may give you aid and comfort. I thought that you possessed everything that makes the heart of man happy."

"No, dear Nora—allow me so to call you—there is one thing more I desire, to make me completely happy—it is your own dear self. I want your rich, pure love. I want you to be my own sweet wife."

As he spoke these words, apparently so unexpected to her, she fell over in a faint against his shoulder, or seemingly so, possibly to hide the excitement of her overpowering joy. This so surprised and excited him, he quickly arose, laid her down in a restful position, with his soft felt hat under her head as a substitute for

a pillow, but soon reaction set in, and returning consciousness was visible, and as she opened her eyes a gentle, quiet smile came over her beautiful face as sweet as that of a babe, awakening from slumber.

"Oh! dear Nora! dear Nora!" he said, as he raised her to an upright position, "Pardon me for my haste and rudeness."

She laughed merrily, but gently, and said: "Perhaps you are not aware that young ladies intuitively have more discernment than the average man gives them credit for. I was hoping, half expecting, a climax of this sort, but notwithstanding this, my great delight and uncontrollable joy overwhelmed me, and I was made helpless, and in your care for a time at least, and now, dear Enoch, yours for years to come, while life does last," and Enoch took her approvingly by the hand, and sat down by

her side. And now we will leave them in the midst of their supreme joy.

[It should be here stated that, in the manner and style of the customary novel or story of the present day, the love scene is made a jumble of nonsense, of cooing and kissing, of petting, fondling and pleading, which is a needless display of the low, animal grossness of our vulgar nature, for could the average love-making scenes immediately preceding marriage be photographed, and the whole reproduced together on a screen as a "living picture," it would be a startling sight, and one which few would wish to look upon ten years after marriage. This sort of thing should have no attraction for minds of noble qualities and intellectual greatness. But it prevails nevertheless. Marriage is not a mere union of bodies. It is more. It is a union of the higher and nobler qualities of man and woman, the union of a similitude of



minds, a union of approving intellects, of genial, longing souls for each other, as exemplified in this true story of Enoch and Nora, who required better evidence of their love for each other than the fallacious, animal-like kiss as simulated in the caressing tongue stroke of the cow and dog, or in the fondling stroke of the bill of birds of land and air. Their noble souls sought the higher and greater joys of intellectual life, which they found in each other. Each found in the mind of the other qualities to admire, not to question or "nag." The emanation of their intellects was always a source of joy to the other, for though differing materially from each other, they were in harmonious accord, as the string of a harp or violin is with its mate. A union of this sort is full of wisdom and joy, more of heaven than of sordid earth. It is a union of two kindred souls reaching out to each in a rebuking frown upon the

“nagging” disturber of the peace and quiet of married life.]

The nature and occurrences of the memorable episode of Enoch and Nora on the summer seat under the tree in which their love was plighted to each other, was for some time not known to anyone except themselves. They named the day, however, of their marriage, which was destined to be one of the happiest days of their eventful lives, which they coyly endeavored not to make known. But the news was too interesting to be kept a secret. Nora and Enoch were now always together, usually in the society of Minnie and Annie. Their uncle, being occupied more or less with his business, had not much time to devote to the numerous social functions of the Fort.

Her uncle was delighted with this turn of affairs.

A marriage at a Fort on the plains at that

time was an episode of very rare occurrence, and caused a stir and an excited interest among the officers' wives and other female attaches.

Uncle Drew had much to do with the conduct and arrangements of the marriage ceremonial. As he had much influence with the commanding officer, his solicitation and wishes respecting the wedding ceremonial were graciously granted. The spacious armory of the fort was beautifully decorated for the occasion. All needful regulations were provided by Nora's uncle. The line of march from the Norton residence across the lawn was as follows:

In first advance—Chaplain Captain Eastlight, Enoch Allen, Nora Norton, Minnie Norton and Andrew Norton.

Second advance—Guard of honor, consisting of a detachment of fifty United States soldiers, in full dress, in ten lines, five abreast.

Third advance—Full military band playing the wedding march.

Fourth advance—Invited guests, consisting of commissioned officers of the Fort, the Indian agent and Chief Big Smoke, an Indian interpreter.

Entering the armory each advance took its place, previously designated, the guard of honor in a decorative manner around the wall, while the others found seats in the body of the hall, the bridal party taking a place well up in front near the chancel.

The chaplain of the Fort united them in marriage, her Uncle Drew giving her away with tears of joy in his eyes, for he felt that a man possessing so many good qualities deserved a worthy wife. A large number of friends were present at the ceremony, and their hearty wishes for the future happiness of the

newly-wedded pair were an index of the delight and pleasure they felt on the occasion.

On their wedding tour Enoch and his bride visited his relatives at St. Louis, after which they located in Denver and invested the greater portion of his vast wealth in stocks and bonds. He thus lives a life of leisure and quiet content. His splendid residence on one of the fashionable streets, with its beautiful lawn and ornamental shrubbery, is often pointed out to strangers as "the residence of one of the richest men in the city."

Minnie was married to Captain Eastlight, who is stationed in Arizona. Annie married a young merchant and resides in Rochester, N. Y. Their mother died in her tent before the marriage of either of her daughters, having had the best of care and attention in her last illness. Andrew Norton, now an old man, resides with his son-in-law in Rochester, N. Y.



# Minta Abel

THE COW-HERDER GIRL





## *MINTA ABEL*

### THE COW-HERDER GIRL



IT is a pleasing study to contemplate the life history of the distinguished citizens which are found in any community. In whatever capacity they excel, whether in business success, intellectual acquirement, or the possession of great wealth, we long to know the hidden pathway which led them to attain their prominence. While their accomplishments are a wonder, we long to penetrate and possess the secret of their success.

Therefore the struggles and incidents which the great ones of the world have passed through in their upward advancement are highly interesting, and we listen eagerly to their recital. But why the stepping stone to prosperity should often be the most adverse and dis-

couraging, is as inexplicable as that one's eyes should be black, another's blue, or that one child should be born in the midst of the comforts of wealth, while another equally attractive is born in the abode of poverty and suffers from want, hunger, and cold, through all the days of its childhood, or that one should have kind and loving parents, the other one cross and cruel ones. That these various conditions of childhood may or may not seriously affect and somewhat shape the course of life is a question which has engaged the earnest consideration and investigation of the philanthropic minds of men.

Whether any of these conditions or the longings of a bright mind shaped Minta Abel's way in life to triumph over all her misfortunes is left for the reader to judge when he reads her wonderful life story.

Poor Minta was too young, too innocent, to

give cause, or do any wrong for which she should be made to suffer, or deserve to be depressed by cruelty and abuse. Yet these were not a shield to her and did not protect her heart from the inflow of sorrow or the desolation of deprivation.

It seemed sad, indeed, when in the providence of God her father was taken from her by death, when she was but a child three years old, thus depriving her of his paternal companionship and care. But it was cruelty, and a misfortune to Minta when, in less than two years after her father's death, her mother married again, and she was compelled to yield obedience and respect to a man who had been a stranger to her till the day he married her mother.

If Minta had had any choice in this matter she would never have chosen Ezra McBride to be her stepfather, for he was repulsive to

her the first time she saw him. His gruff, harsh manner and speech grated on the fine feelings of her nature, and she shrank from him as from one she feared.

Ezra McBride had lived too long the careless life of a bachelor, void of business worry and responsibility, and was of too gross a nature to bear with patience the whims or wants of childhood, or find any pleasure in their innocent prattle or play. He never spoke in tender tones, nor in the soothing voice so endearing to the pure angel spirit of early childhood. He never addressed Minta but to rebuke, direct or command her in some trivial matter.

The home joys and sunshine of Minta's youth were thus covered by the dark shadow of her stepfather's sordid nature.

He was in no way prepossessing. His features were dark and forbidding, coarse and an-

gular. He had lost one of his front teeth in a fight over a glass of ale, it was said, which added to the peculiarity of his looks. When he spoke in animated, or excited tones, his words came out through the vacant space of his absent tooth, causing a snake-like hissing or whistling sound.

It is one of the inexplicable mysteries of social life to see men and women of the most strange contrasts imaginable joined together in marriage. A union of this sort was the marriage of Ezra McBride and Sarah Abel, the good looking young widow. It was accordingly the wonder and the talk of the neighborhood for many months.

She had a good ranch in scarcely a day's ride from Denver, well stocked with cattle, which yielded her a good living, and it went without saying that Ezra McBride married her

more for the love of her home than for her personal attractions.

Be that as it may, the inference was a reasonable one, for he had nothing to add to her small store of wealth. His disregard of, and his harsh manner toward, Minta did not soften with the growing charms of her increasing age, but, on the contrary, he maintained toward her a sort of stern severity and demureness repugnant to her joyous nature.

Minta was now six years old and a child of remarkable beauty and intelligence. Her love of knowledge was so strong that she never seemed so happy as when her mother told her over the names of the letters of the alphabet, or when she taught her how to spell small words. Thus Minta almost persuaded her mother by her anxiety and inquiring look to teach her to read, which was an easy task, for she followed her mother from kitchen to cellar with finger

on a word to be told its meaning or its pronunciation. Thus she became a good reader at a very early age. Seldom do children manifest so much desire to learn as she did. Books were her joy and reading her delight. She borrowed from neighbors far and near to fill this want. But, like many others who have sought to fill their minds with the gems of knowledge and wisdom, she did not find the way to do so smooth nor easy, for books were limited, and her neighbors were miles and miles apart in the cattle growing region where she dwelt, and, besides, at her early age, she was, by the exacting nature of her father, obliged to do many outdoor errands. The old "cow pony," a trained and gentle animal, was often saddled for her, and she was compelled to herd and gather in the cows and assist in the milking. And, by gradually increasing her duty, both in doors and out, she became a

drudge for both her father and her mother. It was Minta here, Minta there, Minta out and Minta in. From early morning till late at night she was on the go. Having a generous disposition and a kind heart, she was animated by a desire to please, and thought but little of these hardships, but, as time wore on, she was made sadly aware that she could not please her unreasonable and ill-natured father. Her conversation he treated with contempt; her work he unkindly criticised and depreciated and her intelligence he underrated, and called her a silly child, or a fool. And now, to increase her weight of misery, she perceived that her mother extended to her less sympathy than formerly. She thought in her childish heart that her mother had all she could do to care for her little half-sister, Nana, and therefore she could not now give her so much attention, while the fact was that her husband's perverse



nature found a hideous pleasure in prejudicing her mother against Minta.

Poor Minta, now cut off from that sympathy and affectionate regard which fill the sweet days of childhood with joyous delight, was cast into gloom. Sadness filled her heart, and now, though but ten years old, she began to think and plan for herself. She therefore determined that she would prove to her father and mother, and others as well, that she had been greatly wronged, and was not weak minded, but would in time fill an honored place among the educated and intelligent ones of the world. This determination absorbed all the other thoughts of her mind, and she thus became apparently morose, but, in fact, she was intent on working out in a spirit of gloomy hopefulness some plan by which she could accomplish her noble purpose. She was, therefore, serious and reflective during this time, as

one oppressed. For most of her time was occupied in herding the cows on the prairies, often five or more miles from her home. She naturally thus became a skillful rider, could ride a horse bareback sideways or otherwise, with a wondrous grace and security. And, as she thus did a "cowboy's" work, she was named "the cowboy-girl" by those who met her on these occasions.

At the beginning of her regular labor as a "cowboy" she met with a most melancholy accident.

She had brought home the cows, and climbing to the top of a stack of hay to get feed for her pony, a wind storm caused her to lose her footing, and she was hurled to the ground, breaking her jaw bone near the joint—which confined her to her bed for several weeks.

Her father, with his characteristic want of sympathy for her, was enraged, for he knew

well he would now be obliged to herd the cows himself, for a while at least, and therefore he said to Minta in angry tones as she lay in her bed :

"You ought a had more sense than go on the stack when the wind blowed," hissing the words through the vacant space of his absent tooth. Now, had Minta failed to feed her pony for this cause, he would with his accustomed perversity have said, as he had often before: "No danger of wind a hurtin' you; it never hurts good-for-nothin' folks."

Minta, comprehending this, and knowing his evil nature, and feeling the injustice she was made to bear, said, submissively, while tears filled her eyes: "Father, I thought that you wanted me to feed the pony." "Yas, I did," said her father, "but no use in bein' awkward and fallin' off a stak'." Her mother, now moved with compassion for her child in her

misfortune and weakness, said: "Ezra, you are unreasonable in expecting so much from Minta. When she does her work well for one of her age you find fault with her because she does not do it with the skill and nicety of one of more mature years. When she does not do it through forgetfulness, of which you yourself are guilty, or for want of time, you call her lazy and good-for-nothing." Feeling that there was some truth in what she said, he replied: "Wal, she wurrys me, and I know I hev caus to cumplane."

Mrs. McBride replied:

"No doubt you think so, but the 'cause' you mention is an imagined one, existing only in your own mind and due to your exactions and your unreasonable requirements of a child."

"Wal, I know what is best for her, better

than you," he replied, hissing the words through the vacant space of his tooth.

"Then, if you know what is best for her, you will get a surgeon and have her jaw set," she said quietly, for she desired to bring this exciting conversation to a close.

"I'll call Dr. Links. He's good e-nuff and it 'ill not cost us so much," said Ezra McBride, feeling a little questionable consolation in the thought that Dr. Links, a quack, and therefore a cheap doctor, would charge less than an experienced and skillful one.

To this, strange as it may seem, Mrs. McBride assented, and the result was most unfortunate to Minta, for the so-called Dr. Links was a villainous quack and he bound up Minta's beautiful face in a bungling manner, and as a result when the time came for the bones to be knit together, and the bandages removed, it was found that her lower jaw was askew, pro-

jecting her lip and jaw to one side in a startling manner to behold, changing the aspect of her countenance, maiming her, as it seemed, for life, and robbing her comely face of its beauty and attractiveness, for her face now conveyed no idea of the fine mental qualities she possessed, nor of the fine and tender feelings of her heart. While her mother felt deeply the calamity of this misfortune to her daughter, and gave to her a sympathy she had long ago withheld, her cynical husband viewed Minta's misfortune with unconcern and ridicule, and opposed his wife's pleadings to have the bone reset, but finally, after much urging, he reluctantly consented to have it done, but upon consulting a surgeon they were told that owing to the complicated nature of the fracture, and of its close proximity to the head and throat, that the result of such a course

would be uncertain, owing to the difficulty of renewing the original fracture.

The purpose was then abandoned, and poor Minta seemed destined to carry this misfortune through life to her grave.

She resigned herself to this new affliction and bore it with fortitude, but did not abandon the resolution of improving her mind by some unknown, hoped-for means. But "where there is a will there is a way," and genius and perseverance will often accomplish unexpected results, and the want of means and opportunity, of which so many complain as a hindrance to their advancement, have, on the contrary, been the stepping stones to the grand achievements of others. Thus the early poverty of John Jacob Astor, Stephen Girard, A. T. Stewart and others taught them the great lesson of economy, by means of which they built vast fortunes, for "economy is wealth." The early

poverty of Horace Greeley, Presidents Lincoln and Johnson, and others, was also the stepping stone to their greatness, for they thereby were taught the value of time and how to use it judiciously. And thus Minta felt that she was destined in some unforeseen way to accomplish her noble purpose.

Having recovered sufficiently from her fall she again began her labors as a "cowboy," which consisted in keeping the cattle together on the best grass and driving them to water at noon and home at night. It was not the labor in itself which made it an unpleasant task, but it was being alone all day, on the treeless, dry, sunny prairie, away from all that was pleasing to her. But to Minta this was not so great a deprivation after all, for her home was no longer pleasant to her, and it was a relief to her to be away from the reproaches and



abuse ever heaped upon her. But Minta found a friend at last in her great need.

Mr. Heisel and family, a well-to-do stock-grower, settled in an adjacent valley, five miles from the McBrides, and in the vicinity of Minta's herding grounds. As Minta often called at the Heisel ranch for a drink of cool water, she thus became acquainted, and received much sympathy and kindness from Mrs. Heisel, who was a woman of culture and refinement, having been a "school-marm" before her marriage. She had a large library, a piano and other appurtenances of a well-furnished home, Minta timidly asked her for the loan of a book, which she freely granted, saying, "You can have others, also."

Thus was Minta made happy by the kindness of a friend, and ever after this when herding the cattle was she seen with book in hand,

reading under the shadow of an improvised screen made of her blanket.

As the cows could be left alone for three or four hours at a time each day, Minta had ample time to visit Mrs. Heisel, who became to her a benefactor and a friend. She taught her to do fancy work, for which her genius and taste gave her an aptitude. Mrs. Heisel found a real pleasure in this benevolent work, for Minta had told her the sad history of her life in such beautiful and masterly language that she was prepossessed in her favor, and therefore willingly aided her in her praiseworthy effort. It was thus that Minta spent the eleventh and twelfth years of her life, making the most of the poor opportunities she had for mental culture and improvement, for there were then no schools in cattle growing districts. But during the winter in which she had entered into her thirteenth year Ezra Mc-

Bride had grown, occasionally, so ill natured to Minta that he often in his anger threatened to drive her away from home, and so deep and strong was his prejudice against her that he seemed to be pleased when she was out of his sight.

Her mother, seeing the condition of affairs, and for the peace and quiet of the family, and for the advantage of Minta, was considering where to find her a more pleasant home.

While matters thus stood Mrs. Heisel called upon the McBrides to ascertain if she could secure the services of Minta for a few weeks. She was surprised to learn that her parents would permit Minta to go for an unlimited time, simply for her board and clothing and three months' tuition in the year. Thus Minta's home was now changed to Heisel's, which filled her with delight—for it was a happy change to her. All was now so pleasant and genial to

her that she seemed to have been transported into another and a happier world.

During the early part of the first summer of her residence with the Heisels she met with an accident which nearly cost her her life. She was thrown violently to the ground from a horse which she was riding, knocking her senseless and severely injuring her about the head. When she had come to her senses again it was found that her jaw was once more broken. A good surgeon was secured, and when it was healed and the bandages removed her jaw was luckily natural and straight again, her teeth and lips meeting properly, which again changed her features, this time for the better, rendering her once more beautiful and attractive, much to the delight of Mrs. Heisel.

In the autumn of that year, and on the twenty-fifth day of September, the Colorado Agri-

cultural Fair was to be held in Denver, and a premium purse of three hundred dollars in gold, donated by a rich mining man, was to be awarded to the best young lady rider, none but misses over the age of twelve and not over sixteen years to compete. Minta, now in her thirteenth year, desired to compete for this prize. Mrs. Heisel made over for Minta one of her gayest riding habits and Minta was furnished a beautiful black horse upon which she trained for the contest. When the day arrived Minta was on hand, anxious and excited, and as beautiful in her gay dress as a full blown rose. With the assistance of Mr. Heisel, at the appointed time she appeared mounted on her noble black horse in lady-like posture, and without a saddle, being seated on a single red blanket folded and held to place by a surcingle. Many pioneers of the early days of Colorado will remember the excitement of the

vast crowd of spectators on this occasion. As the competitors, six in number, leisurely walked their horses around the race track, some said of Minta: "Doesn't she look well." Others, "I wonder how she can stick on her horse without a sidesaddle." Others said: "I bet she'll win." All was now anxiety and excitement. The horses now increased their speed into a gentle trot, and as the contestants rode abreast, it was a grand and beautiful sight to behold these young and fair contestants. As they increased their speed the crowd gave forth loud shouts of encouragement. When the excitement was at its height and the horses were in a lope, Minta, affected by the exciting influences around her, the brass band, with its stimulating music, the applauding shouts of the people, had her spirits so aroused that she leaped to her feet, and standing on her horse, thus rode around the half-mile track, amid the

deafening shouts of the people. She then gracefully dropped to her former position on the back of her horse. It was not hard to predict who had won the prize. Within an hour's time Minta was informed that the judges had awarded the prize to her. Thus was she in a measure compensated for her services as a "cowboy," by which she had gained the skill that won her the purse of gold. And thus what seemed once the most hopeless conditions for her advancement was the very means by which it was attained, for this money enabled her to begin her education.

Mr. Heisel, having sold out his large herd of cattle and ranch for a princely sum, now made his abode with his family in his stylish brick residence on a fashionable street in the gay and bustling city of Denver. Minta now had all the advantages of a stylish and comfortable home and the benefits of the best

society secured to her. By this happy turn of fortune in her favor she was enabled to obtain several years' tuition at the Denver University, an institution of learning equal to any for boys and girls, with but a small outlay of money. By advice of Mr. Heisel and a wide-awake real estate agent, she placed fifty dollars in a rough-looking lot on a back street. This investment proved fortunate for her, for the incomprehensible and wondrous growth of the Queen City of the Plains soon spread around and beyond it, in the short time of three years, so as to increase its value more than a hundred fold. But Minta did not sell it, for she was still a pupil at school, as eager as ever to store her mind with useful knowledge, and she was not led away from her course nor bewildered by the dazzling prospect of her good fortune. But her last year at school was now drawing to a close, and the "commencement



exercises," so-called, would close her career as a school girl. She was allowed by her teachers, as a courtesy, and in recognition of her great literary attainment, to select her own subject for an original address, and on the program appeared her name thus: "Valedictorian, Minta Abel."

A large crowd of people filled the University Hall on this occasion, and when Minta appeared on the platform, and looked over the audience with that leisure and quiet, indicative of self reliance and ability, anxiety and interest was manifested in every face; for the magnetic power of her presence was felt by all. The figure she presented as she thus stood was grand in the extreme, and one which many a more tenderly raised young lady would envy. Her beautiful face was flushed with the glow of good health, and every feature bore marks of intellectual superiority.

She possessed a form of such lithesome grace, and beauty of proportions, as is only obtained by outdoor life and exercise. Her voice was full and melodious, her words sprang from her lips as clear and distinct as sounds from a bell. She spoke more as an accomplished orator than as a school girl. She spoke without the conventional manuscript, and, as it were, from the impulse of the moment. A breathless silence reigned throughout the hall, as she became earnest in her discourse, and when she began to describe the duties of the pupils when they entered upon the realities of life, the buffets, the malice and selfishness of the world, and of the fortitude and moral integrity requisite to offset this, she spoke with such eloquence and power, and with such an easy flow of words, that she surprised and fascinated all with the grandeur, logic and beauty of her address.

After leaving school she was urged by ad-

miring friends to study law in emulation of Mrs. Clara Foltz, the phenomenal and successful woman lawyer of San Francisco, Cal. She readily formed this resolution, and to that end had sold her city lot for the snug sum of six thousand dollars. But, on the eve of her departure for the law school, she learned from a friend that her cruel stepfather was deeply in debt, owing to his bad management of her mother's affairs, and that he and her mother would lose their home in consequence of the foreclosure of a mortgage. Her mind was made up in an instant.

The sale of the McBride homestead was the occasion for the gathering together of a large crowd of queerly dressed cowboys and ranchmen. Before the auctioneer began the sale, a well dressed lady, an apparent stranger to all, drove up in a gay livery rig, and attracted the

attention of all for a while. She looked upon the scene with apparent unconcern till the sale began, when she drove closer to the auctioneer. When apparently the last bid, fifteen hundred dollars, was made and the warning given that the sale would soon close for want of bids, sixteen hundred dollars was heard to come from the solitary lady in the carriage. All eyes were then directed towards her, while wonder filled the minds of all present, and Mr. and Mrs. McBride, who looked sorrowfully upon the sad scene, wondered more than all others. Sixteen hundred and fifty dollars came from a bystander. Seventeen hundred dollars was offered. Eighteen hundred dollars from the lady in the carriage. This was the last bid and the sale was closed.

She now hitched her team to the fence with the skill of an adept, and with the fortitude of a soldier entered the house she had left five

years before, and in a haughty tone and manner said to her cruel stepfather :

“Ezra McBride, this is the day of my triumph and the day you shall be humiliated for the cruelty you unjustly and heartlessly heaped upon me when a child under this very roof.”

“That’s false, you never wus under this here roof afore,” said he, hissing the words through the space of his tooth.

“Do you know Minta Abel, whom you drove from this house,” she replied, “and who now enters by right of law, and who may or may not treat you in a like cruel manner?”

Ezra McBride now recognizing Minta, cried out in an agony of grief: “Oh, Minta, forgive, forgive me,” and he wept like a child. Her mother, bewildered, confused and sad, asked her forgiveness, and also wept, while Nana, her little half sister, looked on in sad wonder.

After the needed explanations were made by each, and her father had apologized for his cruel, ungovernable temper, a better feeling took possession of all, and Minta then made out a free life lease of the ranch to her father and mother.

After an affectionate parting with them she rode away and entered an eastern law school, from which in due time she graduated. She then took up her abode in Helena, Montana, where she opened a law office on one of its busy streets, and she has now, it is reported, already secured a lucrative law practice in both the upper and lower courts.

Thus we see that success in life depends more upon determined effort, unyielding perseverance and industry than upon great advantages or upon ample means, as exemplified in this sketch of the life of the "Cow Herder Girl."



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT LOS ANGELES

THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

This book is **DUE** on the last date stamped below

AUG 7 1941

AUG 26 1953

REC'D URL-LD  
URL NOV 25 1966

NOV 22 1966

REC'D LD-URL

MAY 12 1974

Form L-9  
20m-12, '69 (3350)

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
AT  
LOS ANGELES  
LIBRARY



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



**AA** 000 217 976 0

